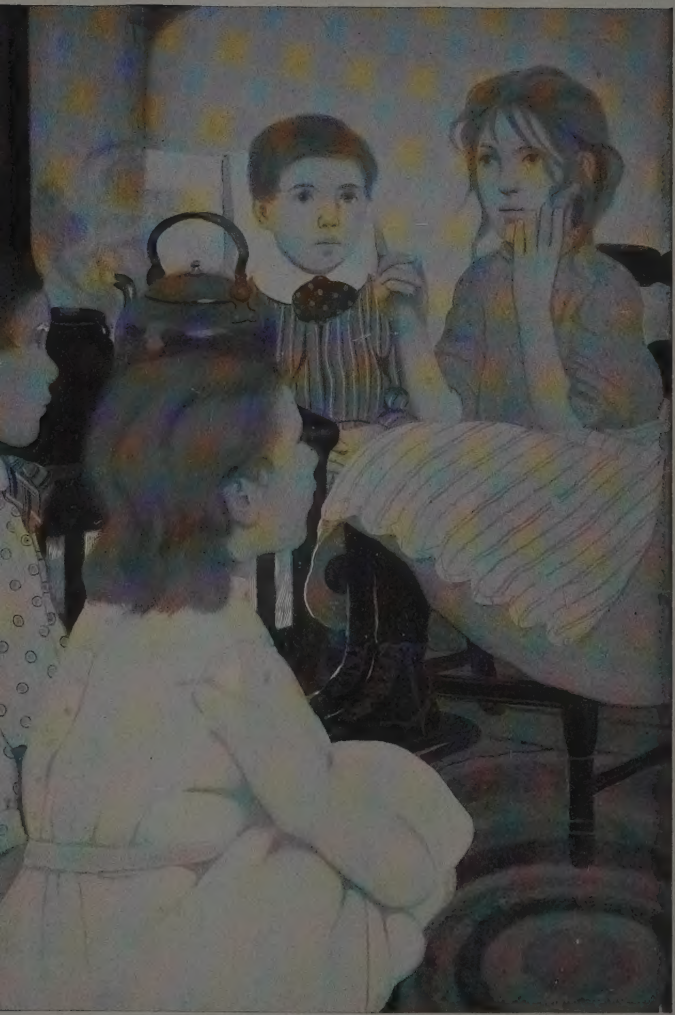

A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about

Memorial Edition

The Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley

IN TEN VOLUMES

Including Poems and Prose Sketches, many of which have not heretofore been published; an authentic Biography, an elaborate Index and numerous Illustrations from Paintings by Howard Chandler Christy and Ethel Franklin Betts

VOLUME V

BOBBS-MERRILL EDITION

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WHAT "OLD SANTA" OVERHEARD

'Tis said old Santa Claus one time
Told this joke on himself in rime:

ONE Christmas in the early din
That ever leads the morning in,
I heard the happy children shout
In rapture at the toys turned out
Of bulging little socks and shoes—
A joy at which I could but choose
To listen enviously, because
I'm always just "Old Santa Claus."
But ere my rising sigh had got
To its first quaver of the thought,
It broke in laughter as I heard
A little voice chirp like a bird—
"Old Santa's mighty good, I know,
And awful rich—and he can go
Down ever' chimbly anywhere
In all the world!—But I don't care.
I wouldn't trade with *him,* and be
Old Santa Claus, and him be me,
Fer all his toys and things—and *I*
Know why and bet you *he* knows why!—
They wuz no Santa Claus when *he*
Wuz ist a little boy like me!"

GRANT

AT REST—AUGUST 8, 1885

Sir Launcelot rode overthwart and endlong in a wide forest, and held no path but as wild adventure led him. . . . And he returned and came again to his horse, and took off his saddle and his bridle, and let him pasture; and unlaced his helm, and ungirdled his sword, and laid him down to sleep upon his shield before the cross.—AGE OF CHIVALRY.

WHAT shall we say of the soldier, Grant,
His sword put by and his great soul free
How shall we cheer him now or chant
His requiem befittingly?
The fields of his conquest now are seen
Ranged no more with his armèd men—
But the rank and file of the gold and green
Of the waving grain is there again.

Though his valiant life is a nation's pride,
And his death heroic and half divine,
And our grief as great as the world is wide,
There breaks in speech but a single line:—
We loved him living, revere him dead!—
A silence then on our lips is laid:
We can say no thing that has not been said,
Nor pray one prayer that has not been prayed.

But a spirit within us speaks: and lo,
We lean and listen to wondrous words
That have a sound as of winds that blow,
And the voice of waters and low of herds;
And we hear, as the song flows on serene,
The neigh of horses, and then the beat
Of hooves that scurry o'er pastures green,
And the patter and pad of a boy's bare feet.

A brave lad, wearing a manly brow,
Knit as with problems of grave dispute,
And a face, like the bloom of the orchard bough,
Pink and pallid, but resolute;
And flushed it grows as the clover-bloom,
And fresh it gleams as the morning dew,
As he reins his steed where the quick quails boom
Up from the grasses he races through.

And ho! as he rides what dreams are his?
And what have the breezes to suggest?—
Do they whisper to him of shells that whiz
O'er fields made ruddy with wrongs redressed?
Does the hawk above him an Eagle float?
Does he thrill and his boyish heart beat high,
Hearing the ribbon about his throat
Flap as a Flag as the winds go by?

And does he dream of the Warrior's fame—
This western boy in his rustic dress?
For, in miniature, this is the man that came
Riding out of the Wilderness!—
The selfsame figure—the knitted brow—
The eyes full steady—the lips full mute—
And the face, like the bloom of the orchard bough,
Pink and pallid, but resolute.

Ay, this is the man, with features grim
And stoical as the Sphinx's own,
That heard the harsh guns calling him,
As musical as the bugle blown,
When the sweet spring heavens were clouded o'er
With a tempest, glowering and wild,
And our country's flag bowed down before
Its bursting wrath as a stricken child.

Thus, ready mounted and booted and spurred,
He loosed his bridle and dashed away!—
Like a roll of drums were his hoof-beats heard,
Like the shriek of the fife his charger's neigh!
And over his shoulder and backward blown,
We heard his voice, and we saw the sod
Reel, as our wild steeds chased his own
As though hurled on by the hand of God!

And still, in fancy, we see him ride
In the blood-red front of a hundred frays,
His face set stolid, but glorified
As a knight's of the old Arthurian days:
And victor ever as courtly, too,
Gently lifting the vanquished foe,
And staying him with a hand as true
As dealt the deadly avenging blow.

So, brighter than all of the cluster of stars
Of the flag enshrouding his form to-day,
His face shines forth from the grime of wars
With a glory that shall not pass away:
He rests at last: he has borne his part
Of salutes and salvos and cheers on cheers—
But O the sobs of his country's heart,
And the driving rain of a nation's tears!

ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK

ON the banks o' Deer Crick! There's the place
fer me!—
Worter slidin' past ye jes' as clair as it kin be:—
See yer shadder in it, and the shadder o' the sky,
And the shadder o' the buzzard as he goes a-lazin'
by;
Shadder o' the pizen-vines, and shadder o' the
trees—
And I purt' nigh said the shadder o' the sunshine
and the breeze!
Well!—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the
sea.—
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

On the banks o' Deer Crick—mil'd er two from
town—
'Long up where the mill-race comes a-loafin'
down,—
Like to git up in there—'mongst the sycamores—
And watch the worter at the dam, a-frothin' as she
pours:
Crawl out on some old log, with my hook and line,
Where the fish is jes' so thick you kin see 'em shine
As they flicker round yer bait, *coaxin'* you to jerk,
Tel yer tired ketchin' of 'em, mighty nigh, as *work!*

On the banks o' Deer Crick!—Allus my delight
Jes' to be around there—take it day er night!—
Watch the snipes and killdees foolin' half the day—
Er these-'ere little worter-bugs skootin' ever' way!—
Snake-feeders glancin' round, er dartin' out o' sight;
And dewfall, and bullfrogs, and lightnin'-bugs at night—
Stars up through the tree-tops—er in the crick below,—
And smell o' mussrat through the dark clean from the old by-o!

Er take a tromp, some Sund'y, say, 'way up to "Johnson's Hole,"
And find where he's had a fire, and hid his fishin'-pole:
Have yer "dog-leg" with ye, and yer pipe and "cut-and-dry"—
Pocketful o' corn-bread, and slug er two o' rye. . . .
Soak yer hide in sunshine and waller in the shade—
Like the Good Book tells us—"where there're none to make afraid!"
Well!—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea.—
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

BILLY COULD RIDE

I

O THE way that Billy could ride!
You should hear Grandfather tell of the lad—
For Grandfather was a horseman too,
Though he couldn't ride now as he used to do,
It yet was his glory and boast and pride,
That he'd "back" Billy for all he had—
And that's a cool million, I'll say to you!—
And you should hear him, with all his praise
Of this boy Billy, and his wild ways;—
The way that he handled a horse, and the way
He rode in town on election day—
The way he bantered, and gaffed, and guyed,
And the ways he swapped, and the ways he lied,
And the way he'd laugh at his victims grim,
Till half of the time they would laugh with him,
Forgetting their anger, and pacified—
Seeing the way that Billy could ride!

II

Billy was born for a horse's back!—
That's what Grandfather used to say:—
He'd seen him in dresses, a-many a day,
On a two-year-old, in the old barn-lot,
Prancing around, with the bridle slack,
And his two little sunburnt legs outshot
So straight from the saddle-seat you'd swear
A spirit-level had plumbed him there!
And all the neighbors that passed the place
Would just haul up in the road and stare
To see the little chap's father boost
The boy up there on his favorite roost,
To canter off, with a laughing face.—
Put him up there, he was satisfied—
And O the way that Billy could ride!

III

At celebration or barbecue—
And Billy, a boy of fifteen years—
Couldn't he cut his didoes there?—
What else would you expect him to,
On his little mettlesome chestnut mare,
With her slender neck, and her pointed ears,
And the four little devilish hooves of hers?
The "delegation" moved too slow
For the time that Billy wanted to go!
And to see him dashing out of the line
At the edge of the road and down the side

Of the long procession, all laws defied,
And the fife and drums, was a sight divine,
To the girls, in their white-and-spangled pride.
Wearily waving their scarfs about
In the great "Big Wagon," all gilt without
And jolt within, as they lumbered on
Into the town where Billy had gone
An hour ahead, like a knightly guide—
O but the way that Billy could ride!

IV

"Billy can ride! Oh, Billy can ride!
But what on earth can he do beside?"
That's what the farmers used to say,
As time went by a year at a stride,
And Billy was twenty if he was a day!
And many a wise old father's foot
Was put right down where it should be put,
While many a dutiful daughter sighed
In vain for one more glorious ride
With the gallant Billy, who none the less
Smiled at the old man's selfishness
And kissed his daughter, and rode away,—
Till one especially rich old chap—
Noted for driving a famous bay—
Gave poor Billy so sharp a rap
Regarding HIS daughter, that Billy replied
By noising it over the country wide,
That the old curmudgeon was simply mad
Because he (Billy) undoubtedly had

A faster horse than the famous bay,
And that was all that he had to say!—
Touched his horse in the flank—and *zipp!*—
Talk about horses and horsemanship!—
Folks stared after him just wild-eyed. . . .
Oomh! the way that Billy could ride!

V

Bang the cymbals! and thump the drum!
Stun the guineas! and pound the gong!
Mr. Bull, git up and come!
And beller and paw for five days long!
Whoop and howl till you drown the band
That hoots and toots in the "Judges' Stand!"
For this is the term of the county fair,
And you bet Billy will be there!—
And watch him there, old horsemen, all!
And judges, you, in your lifted stall!
And gamblers, you, as you clap and clack,
As the order is heard to clear the track!
And watch him, you, by the "Floral Hall,"
With sweet face, pink as the parasol
You wave as you stand on the buggy-seat!—
And you, young man, as you feel her hand
Tremble in yours, as there you stand!
And watch him, too, you old man gray,
With your houses, lands, and your wealth complete—
Not forgetting the famous bay
You ride with him in the race to-day!—

And lash, as you start there side by side!
Lash! for the sake of your bay defied!
Lash! for the proof of your boasted pride!
Lash! as you'd lash a cur that lied!
Lash! but watch him with both eyes wide—
For O the way that Billy can ride.

VI

Side by side in the open track
The horses stood—such a glossy pair!—
Trim as sparrows about to fly—
Plumage of mane and song of eye!
Ho! They were beautiful!—bay and black—
The sunshine glittered along each back—
Glanced at the shoulders, and flickered and run
In dapples of light that would daze the sun!—
The veins of their limbs like tremulous vines
The breeze blows through, and the vibrant lines
Of their nostrils like to the lips of the cups
Of the gods, brimmed over with roseate sups—
From swish of tail to the toss of mane,
Pharaoh's favorites lived again!—
Lived, and served, and as nobly, too,
As they sprang to the race, and onward flew!
Ho! but the sight of them side by side!—
Their masters' faces seemed glorified
As they flashed from view—in an instant gone,
And you saw but their shoulders, as they
rode on,
Narrowing—narrowing—less and less—
As you gazed after in breathlessness.

VII

Shoulder to shoulder, and neck to neck—
And the hearts of the crowd spun round with them
As they dwindled away to the selfsame speck—
When sudden—a flash—like the flash of a gem
That had dropped in the dust, while onward came
But one wild rider, who homeward led,
So mad with delight that he shrieked his name—
And it was not "Billy"—but all the same,
Though far behind, he was far ahead!—
As the one rode in on "his famous bay,"
His gray hair streaming beneath his hat,
And the wind-blown, upturned brim of that
Flat on his forehead—was no acclaim,—
The crowd was looking the other way!
Where, far in the distance, and through the mist
Of the dust, you saw where a hand was kissed
As in hasty adieu—nor was that all,
But, fairly and clearly and sharply defined,
You saw the black horse, with Billy astride,
With a sweet little witch of a woman behind,
Gaily waving a pink parasol,
And the crowd answered roundly with cheer upon cheer,

As the horse lightly wheeled with their manifold weight,
And dashed from your gaze through the big lower gate,
While back down the track, midst a tumult of jeers,
Was seen to rack out, on a "winded" bay,
An aged parent—amazed—irate—
On a race that might not end for years.—
But end it did. . . . "'Who won the race!'"
Grandfather paused, with a graver face,—
"Well, Billy won—but the reason why,
Was the bay was 'blowed'—and so was I!

"Fizzles in everything else he's tried—
But O the way that Billy can ride!"

DAVE FIELD

LET me write you a rune of a rhyme, Dave Field,
For the sake of the past we knew,
When we were vagrants along the road,
Yet glad as the skies were blue;
When we struck hands, as in alien lands
Old friend to old friend is revealed,
And each hears a tongue that he understands,
And a laugh that he loves, Dave Field.

Ho! let me chant you a stave, Dave Field,
Of those indolent days of ours,
With our chairs atilt at the wayside inn
Or our backs in the woodland flowers;
With your pipe alit, and the breath of it
Like a nimbus about your head,
While I sipped, like a monk, of your winy wit,
With my matins all unsaid.

Let me drone you a dream of the world, Dave Field,
And the glory it held for us—
You with your pencil-and-canvas dreams,
And I with my pencil thus;

Yet with never a thought of the prize we sought,
Being at best but a pain,
As we looked from the heights and our blurred eyes caught
The scenes of our youth again.

Oh, let me sing you a song, Dave Field,
Jolly and hale, but yet
With a quaver of pathos along the lines,
And the throb of a vain regret;—
A sigh for the dawn long dead and gone,
But a laugh for the dawn concealed,
As bravely a while we still toil on
Toward the topmost heights, Dave Field.

WHEN WE THREE MEET

WHEN we three meet? Ah! friend of mine
Whose verses well and flow as wine,—
  My thirsting fancy thou dost fill
  With draughts delicious, sweeter still
Since tasted by those lips of thine.

I pledge thee, through the chill sunshine
Of autmun, with a warmth divine,
  Thrilled through as only I shall thrill
    When we three meet.

I pledge thee, if we fast or dine,
We yet shall loosen, line by line,
  Old ballads, and the blither trill
  Of our-time singers—for there will
Be with us all the Muses nine
    When we three meet.

JOSH BILLINGS

DEAD IN CALIFORNIA, OCTOBER 15, 1885

JOLLY-HEARTED old Josh Billings,
With his wisdom and his wit,
And his gravity of presence,
And the drollery of it!—
Has he left us, and forever?—
When so many merry years
He has only left us laughing—
And he leaves us now in tears?

Has he turned from his "Deer Publik,"
With his slyly twinkling eyes
Now grown dim and heavy-lidded
In despite of sunny skies?—
Yet with rugged brow uplifted,
And the long hair tossed away,
Like an old heroic lion,
With a mane of iron-gray.

Though we lose him, still we find him
In the mirth of every lip,
And we fare through all his pages
In his glad companionship:

His voice is wed with Nature's,
  Laughing in each woody nook
With the chirrup of the robin
  And the chuckle of the brook.

But the children—O the children!—
  They who leaped to his caress,
And felt his arms about them,
  And his love and tenderness,—
Where—where will they find comfort
  As their tears fall like the rain,
And they swarm his face with kisses
  That he answers not again?

THE LAND OF THUS-AND-SO

"HOW would Willie like to go
To the Land of Thus-and-So?
Everything is proper there—
All the children comb their hair
Smoother than the fur of cats,
Or the nap of high silk hats;
Every face is clean and white
As a lily washed in light;
Never vaguest soil or speck
Found on forehead, throat or neck;
Every little crimpled ear,
In and out, as pure and clear
As the cherry-blossom's blow
In the Land of Thus-and-So.

"Little boys that never fall
Down the stairs, or cry at all—
Doing nothing to repent,
Watchful and obedient;
Never hungry, nor in haste—
Tidy shoe-strings always laced,
Never button rudely torn

From its fellows all unworn;
Knickerbockers always new—
Ribbon, tie, and collar, too;
Little watches, worn like men,
Always promptly half past ten—
Just precisely right, you know,
For the Land of Thus-and-So!

"And the little babies there
Give no one the slightest care—
Nurse has not a thing to do
But be happy and sigh 'Boo!'
While Mamma just nods, and knows
Nothing but to doze and doze:
Never litter round the grate;
Never lunch or dinner late;
Never any household din
Peals without or rings within—
Baby coos nor laughing calls
On the stairs or through the halls—
Just Great Hushes to and fro
Pace the Land of Thus-and-So!

"Oh! the Land of Thus-and-So!
Isn't it delightful, though?"
"Yes," lisped Willie, answering me
Somewhat slow and doubtfully—
"Must be awful nice, but I
Ruther wait till by and by
'Fore I go there—maybe when
I be dead I'll go there *then*.—

But"—the troubled little face
Closer pressed in my embrace—
"Le's don't never *ever* go
To the Land of Thus-and-So!"

"Each hoss has his appinted place"

THE HOSS

THE hoss he is a splendud beast;
He is man's friend, as heaven desined,
And, search the world from west to east,
No honester you'll ever find!

Some calls the hoss "a pore dumb brute,"
And yit, like Him who died fer you,
I say, as I theyr charge refute,
" 'Fergive; they know not what they do!' "

No wiser animal makes tracks
Upon these earthly shores, and hence
Arose the axium, true as facts,
Extoled by all, as "Good hoss-sense!"

The hoss is strong, and knows his stren'th,—
You hitch him up a time er two
And lash him, and he'll go his len'th
And kick the dashboard out fer you!

But, treat him allus good and kind,
And never strike him with a stick,
Ner aggervate him, and you'll find
He'll never do a hostile trick.

A hoss whose master tends him right
And worters him with daily care,
Will do your biddin' with delight,
And act as docile as *you* air.

He'll paw and prance to hear your praise,
Because he's learnt to love you well;
And, though you can't tell what he says,
He'll nicker all he wants to tell.

He knows you when you slam the gate
At early dawn, upon your way
Unto the barn, and snorts elate,
To git his corn, er oats, er hay.

He knows you, as the orphant knows
The folks that loves her like theyr own,
And raises her and "finds" her clothes,
And "schools" her tel a womern-grown!

I claim no hoss will harm a man,
Ner kick, ner run away, cavort,
Stump-suck, er balk, er "catamaran,"
Ef you'll jes' treat him as you ort.

But when I see the beast abused,
And clubbed around as I've saw some,
I want to see his owner noosed,
And jes' yanked up like Absolum!

Of course they's differunce in stock,—
A hoss that has a little yeer,
And slender build, and shaller hock,
Can beat his shadder, mighty near!

Whilse one that's thick in neck and chist
And big in leg and full in flank,
That tries to race, I still insist
He'll have to take the second rank.

And I have jes' laid back and laughed,
And rolled and wallered in the grass
At fairs, to see some heavy-draft
Lead out at *first*, yit come in *last!*

Each hoss has his appinted place,—
The heavy hoss should plow the soil;—
The blooded racer, he must race,
And win big wages fer his toil.

I never bet—ner never wrought
Upon my feller man to bet—
And yit, at times, I've often thought
Of my convictions with regret.

I bless the hoss from hoof to head—
From head to hoof, and tale to mane!—
I bless the hoss, as I have said,
From head to hoof, and back again!

I love my God the first of all,
  Then Him that perished on the cross,
And next, my wife,—and then I fall
  Down on my knees and love the hoss.

A OLD PLAYED-OUT SONG

IT'S the curiousest thing in creation,
Whenever I hear that old song
"Do They Miss Me at Home," I'm so bothered,
My life seems as short as it's long!—
Fer ev'rything 'pears like adzackly
It 'peared in the years past and gone,—
When I started out sparkin', at twenty,
And had my first neckercher on!

Though I'm wrinkelder, older and grayer
Right now than my parents was then,
You strike up that song "Do They Miss Me,"
And I'm jes' a youngster again!—
I'm a-standin' back thare in the furries
A-wishin' fer evening to come,
And a-whisperin' over and over
Them words "Do They Miss Me at Home?"

You see, *Marthy Ellen she* sung it
The first time I heerd it; and so,
As she was my very first sweethart,
It reminds me of her, don't you know;—

How her face ust to look, in the twilight,
As I tuck her to Spellin'; and she
Kep' a-hummin' that song tel I ast her,
Pine-blank, ef she ever missed *me!*

I can shet my eyes now, as you sing it,
And hear her low answerin' words;
And then the glad chirp of the crickets,
As clear as the twitter of birds;
And the dust in the road is like velvet,
And the ragweed and fennel and grass
Is as sweet as the scene of the lilies
Of Eden of old, as we pass.

"Do They Miss Me at Home?" Sing it lower—
And softer—and sweet as the breeze
That powdered our path with the snowy
White bloom of the old locus' trees!
Let the whipperwills he'p you to sing it,
And the echoes 'way over the hill,
Tel the moon boolges out, in a chorus
Of stars, and our voices is still.

But, oh! "They's a chord in the music
That's missed when *her* voice is away!"
Though I listen from midnight tel morning,
And dawn tel the dusk of the day!
And I grope through the dark, lookin' up'ards
And on through the heavenly dome,
With my longin' soul singin' and sobbin'
The words "Do They Miss Me at Home?"

LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE

INSCRIBED

WITH ALL FAITH AND AFFECTION

To all the little children:—The happy ones; and sad ones;
The sober and the silent ones; the boisterous and glad ones;
The good ones—Yes, the good ones, too; and all the lovely bad ones.

LITTLE Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' brush the crumbs away,
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an' sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board-an'-keep;

An' all us other childern, when the supper-things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

Wunst they wuz a little boy wouldn't say his prayers,—
An' when he went to bed at night, away up-stairs,
His Mammy heerd him holler, an' his Daddy heerd him bawl,
An' when they turn't the kivvers down, he wuzn't there at all!
An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an' press,
An' seeked him up the chimbly-flue, an' ever'-wheres, I guess;
But all they ever found wuz thist his pants an' roundabout:—
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,
An' make fun of ever' one, an' all her blood-an'-kin;
An' wunst, when they was "company," an' ole folks
wuz there,
She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't
care!
An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run
an' hide,
They wuz two great big Black Things a-standin' by
her side,
An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she
knowed what she's about!
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is
blue,
An' the lamp-wick sputters, an' the wind goes
woo-oo!
An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,
An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched
away,—
You better mind yer parunts, an' yer teachurs fond
an' dear,
An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's
tear,

An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

A DOS'T O' BLUES

I GOT no patience with blues at all!
And I ust to kind o' talk
Ag'inst 'em, and claim, tel along last Fall,
They wuz none in the fambly stock;
But a nephew of mine, from Eelinoy,
That visitud us last year,
He kind o' convinct me differunt
Whilse he wuz a-stayin' here.

From ev'ry-which-way that blues is from,
They'd pester him *ev'ry*-ways;
They'd come to him in the night, and come
On Sund'ys, and rainy days;
They'd tackle him in corn-plantin' time,
And in harvest, and airly Fall,—
But a dos't o' blues in the *Winter*-time,
He 'lowed, wuz the worst of all!

Said "All diseases that ever *he* had—
The mumps, er the rhumatiz—
Er ev'ry-other-day-aigger—bad
As ever the blame thing is!—

Er a cyarbuncle, say, on the back of his neck,
  Er a felon on his thumb,—
But you keep *the blues* away from him,
  And all o' the rest could come!"

And he'd moan, "They's nary a leaf below!
  Ner a spear o' grass in sight!
And the whole wood-pile's clean under snow!
  And the days is dark as night!
You can't go out—ner you can't stay in—
  Lay down—stand up—ner set!"
And a tetch o' regular tyfoid-blues
  Would double him jes' clean shet!

I writ his parunts a postal-kyard
  He could stay tel Spring-time come;
And Aprile—*first,* as I rickollect—
  Wuz the day we shipped him home!
Most o' his *relatives,* sence then,
  Has eether give up, er quit,
Er jes' died off; but I understand
  He's the same old color yit!

THE TRAIN-MISSER

At Union Station

'L where in the world my eyes has bin—
Ef I hain't missed that train ag'in!
Chuff! and whistle! and toot! and ring!
But blast and blister the dasted train!—
How it does it I can't explain!
Git here thirty-five minutes before
The durn thing's due!—and, drat the thing!
It'll manage to git past—shore!

The more I travel around, the more
I got no sense!—To stand right here
And let it beat me! 'Ll ding my melts!
I got no gumption, ner nothin' else!
Ticket Agent's a dad-burned bore!
Sell you a ticket's all they keer!—
Ticket Agents ort to all be
Prosecuted—and that's jes' what!—
How'd I know which train's fer me?
And how'd I know which train was not?
Goern and comin' and gone astray,
And backin' and switchin' ever'-which-way!

Ef I could jes' sneak round behind
Myse'f, where I could git full swing,
I'd lift my coat, and kick, by jing!
Till I jes' got jerked up and fined!—
Fer here I stood, as a durn fool's apt
To, and let that train jes' chuff and choo
Right apast me—and mouth jes' gapped
Like a blamed old sandwitch warped in two!

THE PLAINT HUMAN

SEASON of snows, and season of flowers,
Seasons of loss and gain!—
Since grief and joy must alike be ours,
Why do we still complain?

Ever our failing, from sun to sun,
O my intolerant brother:—
We want just a little too little of one,
And much too much of the other.

WHICH ANE

WHICH ane, an' which ane,
An' which ane for thee?—
Here thou hast thy vera choice
An' which sall it be?—
Ye hae the Holy Brither,
An' ye hae the Scholarly;
An', last, ye hae the butt o' baith—
Which sall it be?

Ane's oot o' Edinborough,
Wi' the Beuk an' Gown;
An' ane's cam frae Cambridge;
An' ane frae scaur an' down:
An' Deil tak the hindmaist!
Sae the test gaes roun':
An' here ye hae the lairdly twa,
An' ane frae scaur an' down.

Yon's Melancholy—
An' the pipes a-skirlin'—
Gangs limp an' droopet,
Like a coof at hirlin',—

Droopet aye his lang skirts
I' the wins unfurlin';
Yon's Melancholy—
An' the pipes a-skirlin'!

Which ane, an' which ane,
An' which ane for thee?—
Here thou hast thy vera choice:
An' which sall it be?—
Ye hae the Holy Brither,
An' ye hae the Scholarly;
An', last, ye hae the butt o' baith—
Which sall it be?

Elbuck ye'r bag, mon!
An' pipe as ye'd burst!
Can ye gie's a waur mon
E'en than the first?—
Be it Meister Wisemon,
I' the classics versed,
An' a slawer gait yet
E'en than the first?

Then gie us Merriment:
Loose him like a linnet
Teeterin' on a bloomin' spray—
We ken him i' the minute,—
Twinklin' is ane ee asklent,
Wi' auld Clootie in it—
Auld Sawney Lintwhite,
We ken him i' the minute!

An' which ane, an' which ane,
  An' which ane for thee?—
For thou shalt hae thy vera choice,
  An' which sall it be?—
Ye hae the Holy Brither,
  An' ye hae the Scholarly;
A' last, ye hae the butt o' baith—
  Which sall it be?

REGARDIN' TERRY HUT

SENCE I tuk holt o' Gibbses' Churn
And be'n a-handlin' the concern,
I've traveled round the grand old State
Of Indiany, lots, o' late!—
I've canvassed Crawferdsville and sweat
Around the town o' Layfayette;
I've saw a many a County-seat
I *ust* to think was hard to beat:
At constant dreenage and expense
I've worked Greencastle and Vincennes—
Drapped out o' Putnam into Clay,
Owen, and on down thataway
Plum into Knox, on the back-track
Fer home ag'in—and glad I'm back!—
I've saw these towns, as I say—but
They's none 'at beats old Terry Hut!

It's more'n likely you'll insist
I claim this 'cause I'm predjudist,
Bein' born'd here in ole Vygo
In sight o' Terry Hut;—but no,
Yer clean dead wrong!—and I maintain
They's nary drap in ary vein

O' mine but what's as free as air
To jes' take issue with you there!—
'Cause, boy and man, fer forty year,
I've argied *ag'inst* livin' here,
And jawed around and traded lies
About our lack o' enterprise,
And tuk and turned in and agreed
All other towns was in the lead,
When—drat my melts!—they couldn't cut
No shine a-tall with Terry Hut!

Take, even, statesmanship, and wit,
And ginerel git-up-and-git,
Old Terry Hut is sound clean through!—
Turn old Dick Thompson loose, er Dan
*Vore*hees—and where's they any man
Kin even hold a candle to
Their eloquence?—And where's as clean
A fi-nan-seer as Rile' McKeen—
Er puorer, in his daily walk,
In railroad er in racin' stock!
And there's 'Gene Debs—a man 'at stands
And jes' holds out in his two hands
As warm a heart as ever beat
Betwixt here and the Jedgment Seat!—
All these is reasons why I putt
Sich bulk o' faith in Terry Hut.

So I've come back, with eyes 'at sees
My faults, at last,—to make my peace
With this old place, and truthful' swear—

Like Gineral Tom Nelson does,—
"They hain't no city anywhere
On God's green earth lays over us!"
Our city govament is *grand*—
"Ner is they better farmin'-land
Sun-kissed"—as Tom goes on and says—
"Er dower'd with sich advantages!"
And I've come back, with welcome tread,
From journeyin's vain, as I have said,
To settle down in ca'm content,
And cuss the towns where I have went,
And brag on ourn, and boast and strut
Around the streets o' Terry Hut!

A TALE OF THE AIRLY DAYS

OH! tell me a tale of the airly days—
Of the times as they ust to be;
"Piller of Fi-er" and "Shakespeare's Plays"
Is a'most too deep fer me!
I want plane facts, and I want plane words,
Of the good old-fashioned ways,
When speech run free as the songs of birds
'Way back in the airly days.

Tell me a tale of the timber-lands—
Of the old-time pioneers;
Somepin' a pore man understands
With his feelin's 's well as ears.
Tell of the old log house,—about
The loft, and the puncheon flore—
The old fi-er-place, with the crane swung out,
And the latch-string thrugh the door.

Tell of the things jest as they was—
They don't need no excuse!—
Don't tetch 'em up like the poets does,
Tel theyr all too fine fer use!—

Say they was 'leven in the fambily—
  Two beds, and the chist, below,
And the trundle-beds that each helt three,
  And the clock and the old bureau.

Then blow the horn at the old back-door
  Tel the echoes all halloo,
And the childern gethers home onc't more,
  Jest as they ust to do:
Blow fer Pap tel he hears and comes,
  With Tomps and Elias, too,
A-marchin' home, with the fife and drums
  And the old Red White and Blue!

Blow and blow tel the sound draps low
  As the moan of the whipperwill,
And wake up Mother, and Ruth and Jo,
  All sleepin' at Bethel Hill:
Blow and call tel the faces all
  Shine out in the back-log's blaze,
And the shadders dance on the old hewed wall
  As they did in the airly days.

THE ROSSVILLE LECTUR' COURSE

[*Set down from the real facts of the case that come under notice of the author whilse visitun far distunt relatives who wuz then residin' at Rossville, Mich.*]

FOLKS up here at Rossville got up a Lectur' Course:—
All the leadin' citizens they wuz out in force;
Met and talked at Williamses', and 'greed to meet ag'in;
And helt another corkus when the next reports wuz in:
Met ag'in at Samuelses'; and met ag'in at Moore's
And Johnts putt the shutters up and jest barr'd the doors!—
And yit, I'll jest be dagg-don'd! ef't didn't take a week
'Fore we'd settled whare to write to git a man to speak!

Found out whare the *"Bureau"* wuz; and then and thare agreed
To strike whilse the iron's hot and foller up the lead.—

"We talked and jawed around another week er so"

Simp wuz Secatary; so he tuk his pen in hand,
And ast 'em what they'd tax us fer the one on
"Holy Land"—
"One of Colonel J. De-Koombs's Abelust and Best
Lectur's," the circ'lar stated, "Give East er West!"
Wanted fifty dollars and his kyar-fare to and from,
And Simp wuz hence instructed fer to write him not
to come.

Then we talked and jawed around another week er
so,
And writ the *"Bureau"* 'bout the town a-bein' sorto'
slow—
Old-fogey-like, and pore as dirt, and lackin' inter-
prise,
And ignornter'n any other, 'cordin' to its size:
Tel finully the *"Bureau"* said they'd send a cheaper
man
Fer forty dollars, who would give "A Talk About
Japan"—
"A reg'lar Japanee hise'f," the pamphlet claimed;
and so,
Nobody knowed his languige, and of course we let
him go!

Kindo' then let up a spell—but rallied onc't ag'in,
And writ to price a feller on what's called the
"violin"—
A Swede, er Pole, er somepin'—but no matter what
he wuz,
Doc Cooper said he'd heerd him, and he wuzn't
wuth a kuss!

And then we ast fer *Swingse's* terms; and *Cook,*
and *Ingersoll*—
And blame! ef forty dollars looked like anything at
all!
And then *Burdette,* we tried fer *him;* and Bob he
writ to say
He wuz busy writin' ortographts and couldn't git
away.

At last—along in Aprile—we signed to take this-
here
Bill Nye of Californy, 'at wuz posted to appear
"The Comicalest Funny Man 'at Ever Jammed a
Hall!"
So we made big preperations, and swep' out the
church and all!
And night he wuz to lectur', and the neghbors all
wuz thare,
And strangers packed along the aisles 'at come from
ev'rywhare,
Committee got a telegrapht the preacher read, 'at
run—
"Got off at Rossville, *Indiany,* 'stid of Michigun."

HER BEAUTIFUL EYES

O HER beautiful eyes! they are as blue as the dew
On the violet's bloom when the morning is new,
And the light of their love is the gleam of the sun
O'er the meadows of Spring where the quick shadows run:
As the morn shifts the mists and the clouds from the skies—
So I stand in the dawn of her beautiful eyes.

And her beautiful eyes are as midday to me,
When the lily-bell bends with the weight of the bee,
And the throat of the thrush is apulse in the heat,
And the senses are drugged with the subtle and sweet
And delirious breaths of the air's lullabies—
So I swoon in the noon of her beautiful eyes.

O her beautiful eyes! they have smitten mine own
As a glory glanced down from the glare of The Throne;
And I reel, and I falter and fall, as afar
Fell the shepherds that looked on the mystical Star,
And yet dazed in the tidings that bade them arise—
So I grope through the night of her beautiful eyes.

WANT TO BE WHUR MOTHER IS

"WANT to be whur mother is! Want to be
whur mother is!"
Jeemses Rivers! won't some one ever shet that howl
o' his?
That-air yellin' drives me wild!
Cain't none of ye stop the child?
Want yer Daddy? "Naw." Gee whizz!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur
mother is!"
Coax him, Sairy! Mary, sing somepin' fer him!
Lift him, Liz—
Bang the clock-bell with the key—
Er the *meat-ax!* Gee-mun-nee!
Listen to them lungs o' his!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur
mother is!"
Preacher guess 'll pound all night on that old pulpit
o' his;
'Pears to me some wimmin jest
Shows religious interest
Mostly 'fore their fambly's riz!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

. . . . . .

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur
mother is!"
Nights like these and whipperwills allus brings that
voice of his!
Sairy; Mary; 'Lizabeth;
Don't set there and ketch yer death
In the dew—er rheumatiz—
Want to be whur mother is?

BABE HERRICK

AS a rosebud might, in dreams,
'Mid some lilies lie, meseems
Thou, pink youngling, on the breast
Of thy mother slumberest.

TO A JILTED SWAIN

GET thee back neglected friends;
And repay, as each one lends,
Tithes of shallow-sounding glee
Or keen-ringing raillery:
Get thee from lone vigils; be
But in jocund company,
Where is laughter and acclaim
Boisterous above the name.—
Get where sulking husbands sip
Ale-house cheer, with pipe at lip;
And where Mol the barmaid saith
Curst is she that marrieth.

KNEELING WITH HERRICK

DEAR Lord, to Thee my knee is bent.—
Give me content—
Full-pleasured with what comes to me,
What'er it be:
An humble roof—a frugal board,
And simple hoard;
The wintry fagot piled beside
The chimney wide,
While the enwreathing flames up-sprout
And twine about
The brazen dogs that guard my hearth
And household worth:
Tinge with the embers' ruddy glow
The rafters low;
And let the sparks snap with delight,
As fingers might
That mark deft measures of some tune
The children croon:
Then, with good friends, the rarest few
Thou holdest true,

Ranged round about the blaze, to share
My comfort there,—
Give me to claim the service meet
That makes each seat
A place of honor, and each guest
Loved as the rest.

IN THE SOUTH

THERE is a princess in the South
About whose beauty rumors hum
Like honey-bees about the mouth
Of roses dewdrops falter from;
And O her hair is like the fine
Clear amber of a jostled wine
In tropic revels; and her eyes
Are blue as rifts of Paradise.

Such beauty as may none before
Kneel daringly, to kiss the tips
Of fingers such as knights of yore
Had died to lift against their lips:
Such eyes as might the eyes of gold
Of all the stars of night behold
With glittering envy, and so glare
In dazzling splendor of despair.

So, were I but a minstrel, deft
At weaving, with the trembling strings
Of my glad harp, the warp and weft
Of rondels such as rapture sings,—

I'd loop my lyre across my breast,
Nor stay me till my knee found rest
In midnight banks of bud and flower
Beneath my lady's lattice-bower.

And there, drenched with the teary dews,
I'd woo her with such wondrous art
As well might stanch the songs that ooze
Out of the mockbird's breaking heart;
So light, so tender, and so sweet
Should be the words I would repeat,
Her casement, on my gradual sight,
Would blossom as a lily might.

THE HAPPY LITTLE CRIPPLE

I'M thist a little crippled boy, an' never goin' to grow
An' git a great big man at all!—'cause Aunty told me so.
When I was thist a baby onc't I falled out of the bed
An' got "The Curv'ture of the Spine"—'at's what the Doctor said.
I never had no Mother nen—fer my Pa runned away
An' dassn't come back here no more—'cause he was drunk one day
An' stobbed a man in thish-ere town, an' couldn't pay his fine!
An' nen my Ma she died—an' I got "Curv'ture of the Spine"!

I'm nine years old! An' you can't guess how much I weigh, I bet!—
Last birthday I weighed thirty-three!—An' I weigh thirty yet!
I'm awful little fer my size—I'm purt' nigh littler nan
Some babies is!—an' neighbers all calls me "The Little Man"!

An' Doc one time he laughed an' said: "I s'pect, first think you know,
You'll have a little spike-tail coat an' travel with a show!"
An' nen I laughed—till I looked round an' Aunty was a-cryin'—
Sometimes she acts like that, 'cause I got "Curv'ture of the Spine"!

I set—while Aunty's washin'—on my little long-leg stool,
An' watch the little boys an' girls a-skippin' by to school;
An' I peck on the winder, an' holler out an' say:
"Who wants to fight The Little Man 'at dares you all to-day?"
An' nen the boys climbs on the fence, an' little girls peeks through,
An' they all says: "'Cause you're so big, you think we're 'feard o' you!"
An' nen they yell, an' shake their fist at me, like I shake mine—
They're thist in fun, you know, 'cause I got "Curv'ture of the Spine"!

At evening, when the ironin' 's done, an' Aunty's fixed the fire,
An' filled an' lit the lamp, an' trimmed the wick an' turned it higher,
An' fetched the wood all in fer night, an' locked the kitchen door,
An' stuffed the old crack where the wind blows in up through the floor—

She sets the kittle on the coals, an' biles an' makes the tea,
An' fries the liver an' the mush, an' cooks a egg fer me;
An' sometimes—when I cough so hard—her elderberry wine
Don't go so bad fer little boys with "Curv'ture of the Spine"!

An' nen when she putts me tc bed—an' 'fore she does she's got
My blanket-nighty, 'at she maked, all good an' warm an' hot,
Hunged on the rocker by the fire—she sings me hymns, an' tells
Me 'bout The Good Man—yes, an' Elves, an' Old Enchanter spells;
An' tells me more—an' more—an' more!—tel I'm *asleep,* purt' nigh—
Only I thist set up ag'in an' kiss her when she cry,
A-tellin' on 'bout *some* boy's Angel-mother—an' it's *mine!* . . .
My *Ma's a Angel*—but *I'm* got "The Curv'ture of the Spine"!

But Aunty's all so childish-like on my account, you see,
I'm most afeard she'll be took down—an' 'at's what bothers *me!*—

'Cause ef my good old Aunty ever would git sick
an' die,
I don't know what she'd do in Heaven—till *I* come,
by an' by:—
Fer she's so ust to all my ways, an' ever'thing, you
know,
An' no one there like me, to nurse an' worry over
so!—
'Cause all the little childerns there's so straight an'
strong an' fine,
They's nary angel 'bout the place with "Curv'ture of
the Spine"!

HAS SHE FORGOTTEN

I

HAS she forgotten? On this very May
We were to meet here, with the birds and bees,
As on that Sabbath, underneath the trees
We strayed among the tombs, and stripped away
The vines from these old granites, cold and gray—
And yet, indeed, not grim enough were they
To stay our kisses, smiles and ecstasies,
Or closer voice-lost vows and rhapsodies.
Has she forgotten—that the May has won
Its promise?—that the bird-songs from the tree
Are sprayed above the grasses as the sun
Might jar the dazzling dew down showeringly?
Has she forgotten life—love—every one—
Has she forgotten me—forgotten me?

II

Low, low down in the violets I press
My lips and whisper to her. Does she hear,
And yet hold silence, though I call her dear,
Just as of old, save for the tearfulness
Of the clenched eyes, and the soul's vast distress?

Has she forgotten thus the old caress
That made our breath a quickened atmosphere
That failed nigh unto swooning with the sheer
Delight? Mine arms clutch now this earthen heap
Sodden with tears that flow on ceaselessly
As autumn rains the long, long, long nights weep
In memory of days that used to be,—
Has she forgotten these? And, in her sleep,
Has she forgotten me—forgotten me?

III

To-night, against my pillow, with shut eyes,
I mean to weld our faces—through the dense
Incalculable darkness make pretense
That she has risen from her reveries
To mate her dreams with mine in marriages
Of mellow palms, smooth faces, and tense ease
Of every longing nerve of indolence,—
Lift from the grave her quiet lips, and stun
My senses with her kisses—draw the glee
Of her glad mouth, full blithe and tenderly,
Across mine own, forgetful if is done
The old love's awful dawn-time when said we,
"To-day is ours!" . . . Ah, Heaven! can it be
She has forgotten me—forgotten me!

ILLILEO

ILLILEO, the moonlight seemed lost across the vales—
The stars but strewed the azure as an armor's scattered scales;
The airs of night were quiet as the breath of silken sails,
And all your words were sweeter than the notes of nightingales.

Illileo Legardi, in the garden there alone,
With your figure carved of fervor, as the Psyche carved of stone,
There came to me no murmur of the fountain's undertone
So mystically, musically mellow as your own.

You whispered low, Illileo—so low the leaves were mute,
And the echoes faltered breathless in your voice's vain pursuit;
And there died the distant dalliance of the serenader's lute:
And I held you in my bosom as the husk may hold the fruit.

Illileo, I listened. I believed you. In my bliss,
What were all the worlds above me since I found
you thus in this?—
Let them reeling reach to win me—even Heaven I
would miss,
Grasping earthward!—I would cling here, though I
clung by just a kiss.

And blossoms should grow odorless—and lilies all
aghast—
And I said the stars should slacken in their paces
through the vast,
Ere yet my loyalty should fail enduring to the last.—
So vowed I. It is written. It is changeless as the
past.

Illileo Legardi, in the shade your palace throws
Like a cowl about the singer at your gilded porti-
coes,
A moan goes with the music that may vex the high
repose
Of a heart that fades and crumbles as the crimson
of a rose.

THE JOLLY MILLER

RESTORED ROMAUNT

IT was a Jolly Miller lived on the River Dee;
He looked upon his piller, and there he found a flea:
"O Mr. Flea! you have bit me,
And you shall shorely die!"
So he scrunched his bones ag'inst the stones—
And there he let him lie!

'Twas then the Jolly Miller he laughed and told his wife,
And *she* laughed fit to kill her, and dropped her carving knife!—
"O Mr. Flea!" "Ho-ho!" "Tee-hee!"
They *both* laughed fit to kill,
Until the sound did almost drownd
The rumble of the mill!

"Laugh on, my Jolly Miller! and Missus Miller, too!—
But there's a weeping-willer will soon wave over you!"

The voice was all so awful small—
So very small and slim!—
He durst' infer that it was her,
Ner her infer 'twas him!

That night the Jolly Miller, says he, "It's, Wifey dear,
That cat o' yourn, I'd kill her!—her actions is so queer,—
She's rubbin' 'g'inst the grindstone-legs,
And yowlin' at the sky—
And I 'low the moon hain't greener
Than the yaller of her eye!"

And as the Jolly Miller went chuckle-un to bed,
Was *Somepin'* jerked his piller from underneath his head!
"O Wife," says he, on-easi-lee,
"Fetch here that lantern there!"
But *Somepin'* moans in thunder-tones,
"You tetch it ef you dare!"

'Twas then the Jolly Miller he trimbled and he quailed—
And his wife choked until her breath come back, 'n' she *wailed!*
And *"Oh!"* cried she, "it is *the Flea,*
All white and pale and wann—
He's got you in his clutches, and
He's bigger than a man!"

"Ho! ho! my Jolly Miller" (fer 'twas the Flea,
fer shore!),
"I reckon you'll not rack my bones ner scrunch 'em
any more!"
Then *the Flea-Ghost* he grabbed him clos't,
With many a ghastly smile,
And from the door-step stooped and hopped
About four hunderd mile!

HE COMETH IN SWEET SENSE

HE cometh in sweet sense to thee,
Be it or dawn, or noon, or night,—
No deepest pain, nor halest glee,
But He discerneth it aright.

If there be tears bedim thine eyes,
His sympathy thou findest plain,—
The darkest midnight of the skies
He weepeth with the tears of rain.

If thou art joyful, He hath had
His gracious will, and lo, 'tis well,—
As thou art glad, so He is glad,
Nor mercy strained one syllable.

Wild vows are words, as prayers are words.—
God's mercy is not measured by
Our poor deservings: He affords
To listen, if we laugh or cry.

KINGRY'S MILL

ON old Brandywine—about
Where White's Lots is now laid out,
And the old crick narries down
To the ditch that splits the town,—
Kingry's Mill stood. Hardly see
Where the old dam ust to be;
Shallor, long, dry trought o' grass
Where the old race ust to pass!

That's be'n forty years ago—
Forty years o' frost and snow—
Forty years o' shade and shine
Sence them boyhood-days o' mine!—
All the old landmarks o' town
Changed about, er rotted down!
Where's the Tanyard? Where's the Still?
Tell me where's old Kingry's Mill?

Don't seem furder back, to me,
I'll be dogg'd! than yisterd'y,
Sence us fellers, in bare feet
And straw hats, went through the wheat,

Cuttin' 'crost the shortest shoot
Fer that-air old ellum-root
Jest above the mill-dam—where
The blame' cars now crosses there!

Through the willers down the crick
We could see the old mill stick
Its red gable up, as if
It jest knowed we'd stol'd the skiff!
See the winders in the sun
Blink like they wuz wunderun'
What the miller ort to do
With sich boys as me and you!

But old Kingry!—who could fear
That old chap, with all his cheer?—
Leanin' at the winder-sill,
Er the half-door o' the mill,
Swappin' lies, and pokin' fun,
'N' jigglin' like his hoppers done—
Laughin' grists o' gold and red
Right out o' the wagon-bed!

What did *he* keer where we went?—
"Jest keep out o' devilment,
And don't fool around the belts,
Bolts, ner burrs, ner nothin' else
'Bout the blame *machinery,*
And that's all I ast!" says-ee.
Then we'd climb the stairs, and play
In the bran-bins half the day!

Rickollect the dusty wall,
And the spider-webs, and all!
Rickollect the trimblin' spout
Where the meal come josslin' out—
Stand and comb yer fingers through
The fool-truck an hour er two—
Felt so sort o' warm-like and
Soothin' to a feller's hand!

Climb, high up above the stream,
And "coon" out the wobbly beam
And peek down from out the lof'
Where the weather-boards was off—
Gee-mun-*nee!* w'y, it takes grit
Even jest to think of it!—
Lookin' way down there below
On the worter roarin' so!

Rickollect the flume, and wheel,
And the worter slosh and reel
And jest ravel out in froth
Flossier'n satin cloth!
Rickollect them paddles jest
Knock the bubbles galley-west,
And plunge under, and come up,
Drippin' like a worter-pup!

And, to see them old things gone
That I onc't was bettin' on,
In rale p'int o' fact, I feel
Kind o' like that worter-wheel,—

Sort o' drippy-like and wet
Round the eyes—but paddlin' yet,
And, in mem'ry, loafin' still
Down around old Kingry's Mill!

THE EARTHQUAKE

CHARLESTON, SEPTEMBER 1, 1886

AN hour ago the lulling twilight leant
Above us like a gentle nurse who slips
A slow palm o'er our eyes, in soft eclipse
Of feigned slumber of most sweet content.
The fragrant zephyrs of the tropic went
And came across the senses, like to sips
Of lovers' kisses, when upon her lips
Silence sets finger in grave merriment.
Then—sudden—did the earth moan as it slept,
And start as one in evil dreams, and toss
Its peopled arms up, as the horror crept,
And with vast breast upheaved and rent across,
Fling down the storied citadel where wept,
And still shall weep, a world above its loss.

A FALL-CRICK VIEW OF THE EARTH-QUAKE

I KIN hump my back and take the rain,
And I don't keer how she pours;
I kin keep kind o' ca'm in a thunder-storm,
No matter how loud she roars;
I hain't much skeered o' the lightnin',
Ner I hain't sich awful shakes
Afeard o' *cyclones*—but I don't want none
O' yer dad-burned old earthquakes!

As long as my legs keeps stiddy,
And long as my head keeps plum',
And the buildin' stays in the front lot,
I still kin whistle, *some!*
But about the time the old clock
Flops off'n the mantel-shelf,
And the bureau skoots fer the kitchen,
I'm a-goin' to skoot, myself!

Plague-take! ef you keep me stabled
While any earthquakes is around!—
I'm jes' like the stock,—I'll beller
And break fer the open ground!

And I 'low you'd be as nervous
  And in jes' about my fix,
When yer whole farm slides from inunder you,
  And on'y the mor'gage sticks!

Now cars hain't a-goin' to kill you
  Ef you don't drive 'crost the track;
Crediters never'll jerk you up
  Ef you go and pay 'em back;
You kin stand all moral and mundane storms
  Ef you'll on'y jes' behave—
But a' EARTHQUAKE:—Well, ef it wanted you
  It 'ud husk you out o' yer grave!

WHEN THE WORLD BU'STS THROUGH

Casually Suggested by an Earthquake

WHERE'S a boy a-goin',
An' what's he goin' to do,
An' how's he goin' to do it,
When the world bu'sts through?
Ma she says "she can't tell
What we're comin' to!"
An' Pop says "he's ist skeered
Clean—plum—through!"

S'pose we'd be a-playin'
Out in the street,
An' the ground 'ud split up
'Bout forty feet!—
Ma says "she ist knows
We 'ud tumble in";
An' Pop says "he bets you
Nen we wouldn't grin!"

S'pose we'd ist be 'tendin'
Like we had a show,
Down in the stable
Where we mustn't go,—

Ma says, "The earthquake
Might make it fall";
An' Pop says, "More'n like
Swaller barn an' all!"

Landy! ef we both wuz
Runnin' 'way from school,
Out in the shady woods
Where it's all so cool!—
Ma says "a big tree
Might sqush our head";
An' Pop says, "Chop 'em out
Both—killed—dead!"

But where's a boy goin',
An' what's he goin' to do,
An' how's he goin' to do it,
Ef the world bu'sts through?
Ma she says "she can't tell
What we're comin' to!"
An' Pop says "he's ist skeered
Clean—plum—through!"

THE OLD RETIRED SEA-CAPTAIN

THE old sea-captain has sailed the seas
So long, that the waves at mirth,
Or the waves gone wild, and the crests of these,
Were as near playmates from birth:
He has loved both the storm and the calm, because
They seemed as his brothers twain,—
The flapping sail was his soul's applause,
And his rapture, the roaring main.

But now—like a battered hulk seems he,
Cast high on a foreign strand,
Though he feels "in port," as it need must be,
And the stay of a daughter's hand—
Yet ever the round of the listless hours,—
His pipe, in the languid air—
The grass, the trees, and the garden flowers,
And the strange earth everywhere!

And so betimes he is restless here
In this little inland town,
With never a wing in the atmosphere
But the windmill's, up and down;

His daughter's home in this peaceful vale,
And his grandchild 'twixt his knees—
But never the hail of a passing sail,
Nor the surge of the angry seas!

He quits his pipe, and he snaps its neck—
Would speak, though he coughs instead,
Then paces the porch like a quarter-deck
With a reeling mast o'erhead!
Ho! the old sea-captain's cheeks glow warm,
And his eyes gleam grim and weird,
As he mutters about, like a thunder-storm,
In the cloud of his beetling beard.

JIM

HE was jes' a plain, ever'-day, all-round kind of a jour.,
Consumpted-lookin'—but la!
The jokeiest, wittiest, story-tellin', song-singin', laughin'est, jolliest
Feller you ever saw!
Worked at jes' coarse work, but you kin bet he was fine enough in his talk,
And his feelin's too!
Lordy! ef he was on'y back on his bench ag'in to-day, a-carryin' on
Like he ust to do!

Any shopmate'll tell you there never was, on top o' dirt,
A better feller'n Jim!
You want a favor, and couldn't git it anywheres else—
You could git it o' him!
Most free-heartedest man thataway in the world, I guess!
Give up ever' nickel he's worth—
And, ef you'd a-wanted it, and named it to him, and it was his,
He'd 'a' give you the earth!

Allus a-reachin' out, Jim was, and a-he'ppin' some
Pore feller on to his feet—
He'd 'a' never 'a' keered how hungry he was hisse'f,
So's *the feller* got somepin' to eat!
Didn't make no differ'nce at all to him how *he* was
dressed,
He ust to say to me,—
"You togg out a tramp purty comfortable in winter-
time, a-huntin' a job,
And he'll git along!" says he.

Jim didn't have, ner never could git ahead, so overly
much
O' this world's goods at a time.—
'Fore now I've saw him, more'n onc't, lend a dollar,
and haf to, more'n likely,
Turn round and borry a dime!
Mebby laugh and joke about it hisse'f fer a while—
then jerk his coat,
And kind o' square his chin,
Tie on his apern, and squat hisse'f on his old shoe-
bench,
And go to peggin' ag'in!

Patientest feller, too, I reckon, 'at ever jes' natch-
urly
Coughed hisse'f to death!
Long enough after his voice was lost he'd laugh in
a whisper and say
He could git ever'thing but his breath—

"*You* fellers," he'd sort o' twinkle his eyes and say,
"Is a-pilin' on to me
A mighty big debt fer that-air little weak-chested
ghost o' mine to pack
Through all Eternity!"

Now there was a man 'at jes' 'peared-like, to me,
'At ortn't *'a' never* 'a' died!
"But death hain't a-showin' no favors," the old boss
said—
"On'y to *Jim!*" and cried:
And Wigger, who puts up the best sewed-work in
the shop—
Er the whole blame neighberhood,—
He says, "When God made Jim, I bet you He didn't
do anything else that day
But jes' set around and feel good!"

OLD OCTOBER

OLD October's purt' nigh gone,
And the frosts is comin' on
Little *heavier* every day—
Like our hearts is thataway!
Leaves is changin' overhead
Back from green to gray and red,
Brown and yeller, with their stems
Loosenin' on the oaks and e'ms;
And the balance of the trees
Gittin' balder every breeze—
Like the heads we're scratchin' on!
Old October's purt' nigh gone.

I love Old October so,
I can't bear to see her go—
Seems to me like losin' some
Old-home relative er chum—
'Pears like sort o' settin' by
Some old friend 'at sigh by sigh
Was a-passin' out o' sight
Into everlastin' night!
Hickernuts a feller hears
Rattlin' down is more like tears
Drappin' on the leaves below—
I love Old October so!

Can't tell what it is about
Old October knocks me out!—
I sleep well enough at night—
And the blamedest appetite
Ever mortal man possessed,—
Last thing et, it tastes the best!—
Warnuts, butternuts, pawpaws,
'Iles and limbers up my jaws
Fer raal service, sich as new
Pork, spareribs, and sausage, too.—
Yit, fer all, they's somepin' 'bout
Old October knocks me out!

JUDITH

OHER eyes are amber-fine—
Dark and deep as wells of wine,
While her smile is like the noon
Splendor of a day of June.
If she sorrow—lo! her face
It is like a flowery space
In bright meadows, overlaid
With light clouds and lulled with shade.
If she laugh—it is the trill
Of the wayward whippoorwill
Over upland pastures, heard
Echoed by the mocking-bird
In dim thickets dense with bloom
And blurred cloyings of perfume.
If she sigh—a zephyr swells
Over odorous asphodels
And wan lilies in lush plots
Of moon-drown'd forget-me-nots.
Then, the soft touch of her hand—
Takes all breath to understand
What to liken it thereto!—
Never rose-leaf rinsed with dew
Might slip soother-suave than slips
Her slow palm, the while her lips
Swoon through mine, with kiss on kiss
Sweet as heated honey is.

THE LEGEND GLORIFIED

"I DEEM that God is not disquieted"—
This in a mighty poet's rhymes I read;
And blazoned so forever doth abide
Within my soul the legend glorified.

Though awful tempests thunder overhead,
I deem that God is not disquieted,—
The faith that trembles somewhat yet is sure
Through storm and darkness of a way secure.

Bleak winters, when the naked spirit hears
The break of hearts, through stinging sleet of tears,
I deem that God is not disquieted;
Against all stresses am I clothed and fed.

Nay, even with fixed eyes and broken breath,
My feet dip down into the tides of death,
Nor any friend be left, nor prayer be said,
I deem that God is not disquieted.

ON A FLY-LEAF

IN JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY'S POEMS

SINGERS there are of courtly themes—
Drapers in verse—who would dress their rhymes
In robes of ermine; and singers of dreams
Of gods high-throned in the classic times;
Singers of nymphs, in their dim retreats,
Satyrs, with scepter and diadem;
But the singer who sings as a man's heart beats
Well may blush for the rest of them.

I like the thrill of such poems as these,—
All spirit and fervor of splendid fact—
Pulse, and muscle, and arteries
Of living, heroic thought and act!—
Where every line is a vein of red
And rapturous blood all unconfined
As it leaps from a heart that has joyed and bled
With the rights and the wrongs of all mankind.

OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME

IN the jolly winters
  Of the long-ago,
It was not so cold as now—
  Oh! No! No!
Then, as I remember,
  Snowballs to eat
Were as good as apples now,
  And every bit as sweet!

In the jolly winters
  Of the dead-and-gone,
Bub was warm as summer,
  With his red mitts on,—
Just in his little waist-
  And-pants all together,
Who ever heard him growl
  About cold weather?

In the jolly winters
  Of the long-ago—
Was it *half* so cold as now?
  Oh! No! No!

Who caught his death o' cold,
  Making prints of men
Flat-backed in snow that now's
  Twice as cold again?

In the jolly winters
  Of the dead-and-gone,
Startin' out rabbit-huntin'
  Early as the dawn,—
Who ever froze his fingers,
  Ears, heels, or toes,—
Or'd 'a' cared if he had?
  Nobody knows!

Nights by the kitchen stove,
  Shellin' white and red
Corn in the skillet, and
  Sleepin' four abed!
Ah! the jolly winters
  Of the long-ago!
We were not as old as now—
  Oh! No! No!

LEWIS D. HAYES

OBIT DECEMBER 28, 1886

IN the midmost glee of the Christmas
And the mirth of the glad New Year,
A guest has turned from the revel,
And we sit in silence here.

The band chimes on, yet we listen
Not to the air's refrain,
But over it ever we strive to catch
The sound of his voice again—

For the sound of his voice was music,
Dearer than any note
Shook from the strands of harp-strings,
Or poured from the bugle's throat.—

A voice of such various ranges,
His utterance rang from the height
Of every rapture, down to the sobs
Of every lost delight.

Though he knew Man's force and his purpose,
As strong as his strongest peers,
He knew, as well, the kindly heart,
And the tenderness of tears.

So is it the face we remember
Shall be always as a child's
That, grieved some way to the very soul,
Looks bravely up and smiles.

O brave it shall look, as it looked its last
On the little daughter's face—
Pictured only—against the wall,
In its old accustomed place—

Where the last gleam of the lamplight
Out of the midnight dim
Yielded its grace, and the earliest dawn
Gave it again to him.

A LOCAL POLITICIAN FROM AWAY BACK

JEDGE is good at argyin'—
No mistake in that!
Most folks 'at tackles *him*
He'll skin 'em like a cat!
You see, the Jedge is read up,
And b'en in politics,
Hand-in-glove, you might say,
Sence back in '56.

Elected to the Shurrif, first,
Then elected Clerk;
Went into lawin' then,
And buckled down to work;
Practised three or four terms,
Then he run for jedge—
Speechified a little 'round,
And went in like a wedge!

Run fer Legislatur' twic't—
Made her, ever' pop!
Keeps on the way he's doin',
Don't know where he'll stop!

Some thinks he's got his eye
On the gov'nership;—
Well, ef he tuk the track,
Guess he'd make the trip.

But I started out to tell ye—
(Now I allus liked *the man*—
Not fer his politics,
But *social'*, understan'!—
Fer, 's regards to *my* views,
Political and sich.—
When we come together there
We're purty ap' to hitch)—

Ketched him in at Knox's shop
On'y t'other day—
Gittin' shaved, the Jedge was,
Er somepin' thataway.—
Well, I tetched him up some
On the silver bill:—
Jedge says, "I won't discuss it;"
I says, "You *will!*"

I-says-ee, "I reckon
You'll concede with me,
Coin's the on'y ginuine
Money," I-says-ee;
Says I, "What's a dollar-bill?"
Says I, "What's a ten—
Er forty-'leven hunderd of 'em?—
Give us *specie*, then!"

I seed I was a-gittin'
  The Jedge kind o' red
Around the gills. He hawked some
  And cle'red his throat and said—
"Facts is too complicated
  'Bout the bill in view,"
Squirmed and told the barber then
  He wisht he'd hurry through.

'Ll, then, I knowed I had him,—
  And the crowd around the fire
Was all a-winkin' at me,
  As the barber raised him higher—
Says I, "Jedge, what's a dollar?—
  Er a half-un," I-says-ee—
"What's a *quarter?*—What's a *dime?*"
  "What's *cents?*" says he.

W'y, I had him fairly b'ilin'!
  "You needn't comb my hair,"
He says to the barber—
  "I want fresh air;"
And you'd 'a' died a-laughin'
  To 'a' seed him grab his hat,
As I-says-ee, says I, "Judge,
  Where you goin' at!"

Jedge is good at argyin',
  By-and-large; and yit
Beat him at his own game
  And he's goin' to git!

And yit the Jedge is read up,
  And b'en in politics,
Hand-in-glove, you might say,
  Sence back in '56.

THE MUTE SINGER

I

THE morning sun seemed fair as though
It were a great red rose ablow
In lavish bloom,
With all the air for its perfume,—
Yet he who had been wont to sing,
Could trill no thing.

II

Supine, at noon, as he looked up
Into the vast inverted cup
Of heavenly gold,
Brimmed with its marvels manifold,
And his eye kindled, and his cheek—
Song could not speak.

III

Night fell forebodingly; he knew
Soon must the rain be falling, too,—
And, home, heartsore,
A missive met him at the door—
—Then Song lit on his lips, and he
Sang gloriously.

THE CYCLONE

So lone I stood, the very trees seemed drawn
In conference with themselves.—Intense—intense
Seemed everything;—the summer splendor on
The sight,—magnificence!

A babe's life might not lighter fail and die
Than failed the sunlight.—Though the hour was noon,
The palm of midnight might not lighter lie
Upon the brow of June.

With eyes upraised, I saw the underwings
Of swallows—gone the instant afterward—
While from the elms there came strange twitterings,
Stilled scarce ere they were heard.

The river seemed to shiver; and, far down
Its darkened length, I saw the sycamores
Lean inward closer, under the vast frown
That weighed above the shores.

Then was a roar, born of some awful burst! . . .
  And one lay, shrieking, chattering, in my path—
Flung—he or I—out of some space accurst
  As of Jehovah's wrath:

Nor barely had he wreaked his latest prayer,
  Ere back the noon flashed o'er the ruin done,
And, o'er uprooted forests tousled there,
  The birds sang in the sun.

IN DAYS TO COME

IN days to come—whatever ache
Of age shall rack our bones, or quake
Our slackened thews—whatever grip
Rheumatic catch us i' the hip,—
We, each one, for the other's sake,
Will of our very wailings make
Such quips of song as well may shake
The spasm'd corners from the lip—
In days to come.

Ho! ho! how our old hearts shall rake
The past up!—how our dry eyes slake
Their sight upon the dewy drip
Of juicy-ripe companionship,
And blink stars from the blind opaque—
In days to come.

THE STEPMOTHER

FIRST she come to our house,
  Tommy run and hid;
And Emily and Bob and me
  We cried jus' like we did
When Mother died,—and we all said
'At we all wisht 'at we was dead!

And Nurse she couldn't stop us;
  And Pa he tried and tried,—
We sobbed and shook and wouldn't look,
  But only cried and cried;
And nen some one—we couldn't jus'
Tell who—was cryin' same as us!

Our Stepmother! Yes, it was her,
  Her arms around us all—
'Cause Tom slid down the banister
  And peeked in from the hall.—
And we all love her, too, because
She's purt' nigh good as Mother was!

WHEN MY DREAMS COME TRUE

I

WHEN my dreams come true—when my dreams come true—
Shall I lean from out my casement, in the starlight and the dew,
To listen—smile and listen to the tinkle of the strings
Of the sweet guitar my lover's fingers fondle, as he sings?
And as the nude moon slowly, slowly shoulders into view,
Shall I vanish from his vision—when my dreams come true?

When my dreams come true—shall the simple gown I wear
Be changed to softest satin, and my maiden-braided hair
Be raveled into flossy mists of rarest, fairest gold,
To be minted into kisses, more than any heart can hold?—
Or "the summer of my tresses" shall my lover liken to
"The fervor of his passion"—when my dreams come true?

II

When my dreams come true—I shall bide among
the sheaves
Of happy harvest meadows; and the grasses and the
leaves
Shall lift and lean between me and the splendor of
the sun,
Till the noon swoons into twilight, and the gleaners'
work is done—
Save that yet an arm shall bind me, even as the
reapers do
The meanest sheaf of harvest—when my dreams
come true.

When my dreams come true! when my dreams
come true!
True love in all simplicity is fresh and pure as
dew;—
The blossom in the blackest mold is kindlier to the
eye
Than any lily born of pride that looms against the
sky:
And so it is I know my heart will gladly welcome
you,
My lowliest of lovers, when my dreams come true.

THE CHANT OF THE CROSS-BEARING CHILD

I BEAR dis cross dis many a mile.
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

I bear dis cross 'long many a road
Wha' de pink ain't bloom' an' de grass done mowed.
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

Hit's on my conscience all dese days
Fo' ter bear de cross 'ut de good Lord lays
On my po' soul, an' ter lif my praise
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

I's nigh 'bout weak ez I mos' kin be,
Yit de Marstah call an' He say,—"You's free
Fo' ter 'cept dis cross, an' ter cringe yo' knee
To no n'er man in de worl' but Me!"
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

Says you guess wrong, ef I let you guess—
Says you 'spec' mo', an'-a you git less:—
Says you go eas', says you go wes',
An' whense you fine de road 'ut you like bes'
You betteh take chice er any er de res'!
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

He build my feet, an' He fix de signs
Dat de shoe hit pinch an' de shoe hit bines
Ef I on'y w'ah eights an'-a wanter w'ah nines;
I hone fo' de rain, an' de sun hit shines,
An' whilse I hunt de sun, hit's de rain I fines.—
O-a trim my lamp, an'-a gyrd my lines!
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

I wade de wet, an' I walk de dry:
I done tromp long, an' I done clim' high;
An' I pilgrim on ter de jasper sky,
An' I taken de resk fo' ter cas' my eye
Wha' de Gate swing wide an' de Lord draw nigh,
An' de Trump hit blow, an' I hear de cry,—
"You lay dat cross down by an' by!—
O de Cross-bearin' Chile—
De Cross-bearin' Chile!"

THREE DEAD FRIENDS

ALWAYS suddenly they are gone—
The friends we trusted and held secure—
Suddenly we are gazing on,
Not a *smiling* face, but the marble-pure
Dead mask of a face that nevermore
To a smile of ours will make reply—
The lips close-locked as the eyelids are,—
Gone—swift as the flash of the molten ore
A meteor pours through a midnight sky,
Leaving it blind of a single star.

Tell us, O Death, Remorseless Might!
What is this old, unescapable ire
You wreak on us?—from the birth of light
Till the world be charred to a core of fire!
We do no evil thing to you—
We seek to evade you—that is all—
That is your will—you will not be known
Of men. What, then, would you have us do?—
Cringe, and wait till your vengeance fall,
And your graves be fed, and the trumpet blown?

You desire no friends; but *we*—O we
Need them so, as we falter here,
Fumbling through each new vacancy,
As each is stricken that we hold dear.
One you struck but a year ago;
And one not a month ago; and one—
(God's vast pity!)—and one lies now
Where the widow wails, in her nameless woe,
And the soldiers pace, with the sword and gun,
Where the comrade sleeps, with the laureled brow.

And what did the first?—that wayward soul,
Clothed of sorrow, yet nude of sin,
And with all hearts bowed in the strange control
Of the heavenly voice of his violin.
Why, it was music the way he *stood*,
So grand was the poise of the head and so
Full was the figure of majesty!—
One heard with the eyes, as a deaf man would,
And with all sense brimmed to the overflow
With tears of anguish and ecstasy.

And what did the girl, with the great warm light
Of genius sunning her eyes of blue,
With her heart so pure, and her soul so white—
What, O Death, did she do to you?
Through field and wood as a child she strayed,
As Nature, the dear sweet mother led;
While from her canvas, mirrored back,

Glimmered the stream through the everglade
Where the grape-vine trailed from the trees to wed
Its likeness of emerald, blue and black.

And what did he, who, the last of these,
Faced you, with never a fear, O Death?
Did you hate *him* that he loved the breeze,
And the morning dews, and the rose's breath?
Did you hate him that he answered not
Your hate again—but turned, instead,
His only hate on his country's wrongs?
Well—you possess him, dead!—but what
Of the good he wrought? With laureled head
He bides with us in his deeds and songs.

Laureled, first, that he bravely fought,
And forged a way to our flag's release;
Laureled, next, for the harp he taught
To wake glad songs in the days of peace—
Songs of the woodland haunts he held
As close in his love as they held their bloom
In their inmost bosoms of leaf and vine—
Songs that echoed and pulsed and welled
Through the town's pent streets, and the sick child's room,
Pure as a shower in soft sunshine.

Claim them, Death; yet their fame endures.
What friend next will you rend from us
In that cold, pitiless way of yours,
And leave us a grief more dolorous?

Speak to us!—tell us, O Dreadful Power!—
Are we to have not a lone friend left?—
Since, frozen, sodden, or green the sod,
In every second of every hour,
Some one, Death, you have thus bereft,
Half inaudibly shrieks to God.

WHEN SHE COMES HOME

WHEN she comes home again! A thousand ways
I fashion, to myself, the tenderness
Of my glad welcome: I shall tremble—yes;
And touch her, as when first in the old days
I touched her girlish hand, nor dared upraise
Mine eyes, such was my faint heart's sweet distress
Then silence: and the perfume of her dress:
The room will sway a little, and a haze
Cloy eyesight—soul-sight, even—for a space;
And tears—yes; and the ache here in the throat,
To know that I so ill deserve the place
Her arms make for me; and the sobbing note
I stay with kisses, ere the tearful face
Again is hidden in the old embrace.

LUTHER A. TODD

OBIT JULY 27, 1887, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

GIFTED, and loved and praised
By every friend;
Never a murmur raised
Against him, to the end!
With tireless interest
He wrought as he thought best,—
And—lo, we bend
Where now he takes his rest!

His heart was loyal, to
Its latest thrill,
To the home-loves he knew—
And now forever will,—
Mother and brother—they
The first to pass away,—
And, lingering still,
The sister bowed to-day.

Pure as a rose might be,
And sweet, and white,
His father's memory
Was with him day and night:—

He spoke of him, as one
May now speak of the son,—
  Sadly and tenderly,
Yet as a trump had done.

Say, then, of him: He knew
  Full depths of care
And stress of pain, and you
  Do him scant justice there,—
Yet in the lifted face
Grief left not any trace,
  Nor mark unfair,
To mar its manly grace.

It was as if each day
  Some new hope dawned—
Each blessing in delay,
  To him, was just beyond;
Between whiles, waiting, he
Drew pictures cunningly—
  Fantastic—fond—
Things that we laughed to see.

Sometimes, as we looked on
  His crayon's work,
Some angel-face would dawn
  Out radiant, from the mirk
Of features old and thin,
Or jowled with double-chin,
  And eyes asmirk,
And gaping mouths agrin.

That humor in his art,
  Of genius born,
Welled warmly from a heart
  That could not but adorn
All things it touched with love—
The eagle, as the dove—
  The burst of morn—
The night—the stars above.

Sometimes, amid the wild
  Of faces queer,
A mother, with her child
  Pressed warm and close to her;
This, I have thought, somehow,
The wife, with head abow,
  Unreconciled,
In the great shadow now.

. . . .

O ye of sobbing breath,
  Put by all sighs
Of anguish at his death—
  Turn—as he turned *his* eyes,
In that last hour, unknown
In strange lands, all alone—
  Turn thine eyes toward the skies,
And, smiling, cease thy moan.

WHEN OLD JACK DIED

WHEN Old Jack died, we stayed from school
(they said,
At home, we needn't go that day), and none
Of us ate any breakfast—only one,
And that was Papa—and his eyes were red
When he came round where we were, by the shed
Where Jack was lying, half-way in the sun
And half-way in the shade. When we begun
To cry out loud, Pa turned and dropped his head
And went away; and Mamma, she went back
Into the kitchen. Then, for a long while,
All to ourselves, like, we stood there and cried.
We thought so many good things of Old Jack,
And funny things—although we didn't smile—
We couldn't only cry when Old Jack died.

When Old Jack died, it seemed a human friend
Had suddenly gone from us; that some face
That we had loved to fondle and embrace
From babyhood, no more would condescend
To smile on us forever. We might bend
With tearful eyes above him, interlace

Our chubby fingers o'er him, romp and race,
Plead with him, call and coax—aye, we might send
The old halloo up for him, whistle, hist,
(If sobs had let us) or, as wildly vain,
Snapped thumbs, called "Speak," and he had not
replied;
We might have gone down on our knees and kissed
The tousled ears, and yet they must remain
Deaf, motionless, we knew—when Old Jack died.

When Old Jack died, it seemed to us, some way,
That all the other dogs in town were pained
With our bereavement, and some that were chained,
Even, unslipped their collars on that day
To visit Jack in state, as though to pay
A last, sad tribute there, while neighbors craned
Their heads above the high board fence, and
deigned
To sigh "Poor Dog!" remembering how they
Had cuffed him, when alive, perchance, because,
For love of them he leaped to lick their hands—
Now, that he could not, were they satisfied?
We children thought that, as we crossed his paws,
And o'er his grave, 'way down the bottom-lands,
Wrote "Our First Love Lies Here," when Old
Jack died.

WHEN THE HEARSE COMES BACK

A THING 'at's 'bout as tryin' as a healthy man kin meet
Is some poor feller's funeral a-joggin' 'long the street:
The slow hearse and the hosses—slow enough, to say the least,
Fer to even tax the patience of the gentleman deceased!
The low scrunch of the gravel—and the slow grind of the wheels,—
The low, slow go of ev'ry woe 'at ev'rybody feels!
So I ruther like the contrast when I hear the whip-lash crack
A quickstep fer the hosses,
When the
Hearse
Comes
Back!

Meet it goin' to'rds the cimet'ry, you'll want to drap yer eyes—
But ef the plumes don't fetch you, it'll ketch you otherwise—
You'll haf to see the caskit, though you'd ort to look away!
And 'conomize and save yer sighs fer any other day!

Yer sympathizin' won't wake up the sleeper from
his rest—
Yer tears won't thaw them hands o' his 'at's froze
acrost his breast!
And this is why—when airth and sky's a-gittin'
blurred and black—
I like the flash and hurry
When the
Hearse
Comes
Back!

It's not 'cause I don't 'preciate it ain't no time fer
jokes,
Ner 'cause I' got no common human feelin' fer the
folks;—
I've went to funerals myse'f, and tuk on some,
perhaps—
Fer my heart's 'bout as mal'able as any other
chap's,—
I've buried father, mother—but I'll haf to jes' git
you
To "excuse *me,*" as the feller says.—The p'int I'm
drivin' to
Is, simply, when we're plum broke down and all
knocked out o' whack,
It he'ps to shape us up, like,
When the
Hearse
Comes
Back!

The idy! wadin' round here over shoe-mouth deep
in woe,
When they's a graded 'pike o' joy and sunshine,
don't you know!
When evening strikes the pastur', cows'll pull out
fer the bars,
And skittish-like from out the night'll prance the
happy stars.
And so when *my* time comes to die, and I've got
ary friend
'At wants expressed my last request—I'll, mebby,
rickommend
To drive slow, ef they haf to, goin' 'long the
out'ard track,
But I'll smile and say, "You speed 'em
When the
Hearse
Comes
Back!"

NESSMUK

I HAIL thee, Nessmuk, for the lofty tone
Yet simple grace that marks thy poetry!
True forester thou art, and still to be,
Even in happier fields than thou hast known.
Thus, in glad visions, glimpses am I shown
Of groves delectable—"preserves" for thee—
Ranged but by friends of thine—I name thee three:—
First, Chaucer, with his bald old pate new-grown
With changeless laurel; next, in Lincoln-green,
Gold belted, bowed and bugled, Robin Hood;
And next, Ike Walton, patient and serene:
These three, O Nessmuk, gathered hunter-wise,
Are camped on hither slopes of Paradise,
To hail thee first and greet thee, as they should.

BACK FROM A TWO-YEARS' SENTENCE

BACK from a two-years' sentence!
And though it had been ten,
You think, I were scarred no deeper
In the eyes of my fellow men.
"My fellow men"?—sounds like a satire,
You think—and I so allow,
Here in my home since childhood,
Yet more than a stranger now!

Pardon!—Not wholly a stranger,—
For I have a wife and child:
That woman has wept for two long years,
And yet last night she smiled!—
Smiled, as I leapt from the platform
Of the midnight train, and then—
All that I knew was that smile of hers,
And our babe in my arms again!

Back from a two-years' sentence—
But I've thought the whole thing through,—
A hint of it came when the bars swung back
And I looked straight up in the blue

Of the blessed skies with my hat off!
Oho! I've a wife and child:
That woman has wept for two long years,
And yet last night she smiled!

TO ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

ON HIS FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON!
Blue the lift and braw the dawn
O' yer comin' here amang
Strangers wha hae luved ye lang!
Strangers tae ye we maun be,
Yet tae us ye're kenned a wee
By the writin's ye hae done,
Robert Louis Stevenson.

Syne ye've pit yer pen tae sic'
Tales it stabbt us tae the quick—
Whiles o' tropic isles an' seas
An' o' gowden treesuries—
Tales o' deid men's banes; an' tales
Swete as sangs o' nightingales
When the nune o' mirk's begun—
Robert Louis Stevenson.

Sae we hail thee! nane the less
For the "burr" that ye caress
Wi' yer denty tongue o' Scots,
Makin' words forget-me-nots

O' yer bonnie braes that were
Sung o' Burns the Poemer—
And that later lavrock, one
Robert Louis Stevenson.

THEM FLOWERS

TAKE a feller 'at's sick and laid up on the shelf,
All shaky, and ga'nted, and pore—
Jes' all so knocked out he can't handle hisself
With a stiff upper-lip any more;
Shet him up all alone in the gloom of a room
As dark as the tomb, and as grim,
And then take and send him some roses in bloom,
And you can have fun out o' him!

You've ketched him 'fore now—when his liver
was sound
And his appetite notched like a saw—
A-mockin' you, maybe, fer romancin' round
With a big posy-bunch in yer paw;
But you ketch him, say, when his health is away,
And he's flat on his back in distress,
And *then* you kin trot out yer little bokay
And not be insulted, I guess!

You see, it's like this, what his weaknesses is,—
Them flowers makes him think of the days
Of his innocent youth, and that mother o' his,
And the roses that *she* us't to raise:—

So here, all alone with the roses you send—
  Bein' sick and all trimbly and faint,—
My eyes is—my eyes is—my eyes is—old friend—
  Is a-leakin'—I'm blamed ef they ain't!

THE ROBINS' OTHER NAME

IN the Orchard-Days, when you
Children look like blossoms, too;
Bessie, with her jaunty ways
And trim poise of head and face,
Must have looked superior
Even to the blossoms,—for
Little Winnie once averred
Bessie looked just like the bird
Tilted on the topmost spray
Of the apple boughs in May,
With the redbreast, and the strong,
Clear, sweet warble of his song.—
"I don't know their *name*," Win said—
"I ist *maked* a name instead."—
So forever afterwards
We called robins "Bessie-birds."

THE RAIN

I

THE rain! the rain! the rain!
  It gushed from the skies and streamed
Like awful tears; and the sick man thought
  How pitiful it seemed!
And he turned his face away
  And stared at the wall again,
His hopes nigh dead and his heart worn out.
  O the rain! the rain! the rain!

II

The rain! the rain! the rain!
  And the broad stream brimmed the shores;
And ever the river crept over the reeds
  And the roots of the sycamores:
A corpse swirled by in a drift
  Where the boat had snapt its chain—
And a hoarse-voiced mother shrieked and raved.
  O the rain! the rain! the rain!

III

The rain! the rain! the rain!—
  Pouring, with never a pause,
Over the fields and the green byways—
  How beautiful it was!
And the new-made man and wife
  Stood at the window-pane
Like two glad children kept from school.
  O the rain! the rain! the rain!

TO EDGAR WILSON NYE

O "WILLIAM," in thy blithe companionship
What liberty is mine—what sweet release
From clamorous strife, and yet what boisterous peace!
Ho! ho! it is thy fancy's finger-tip
That dints the dimple now, and kinks the lip
That scarce may sing, in all this glad increase
Of merriment! So, pray-thee, do not cease
To cheer me thus;—for, underneath the quip
Of thy droll sorcery, the wrangling fret
Of all distress is stilled—no syllable
Of sorrow vexeth me—no tear-drops wet
My teeming lids save those that leap to tell
Thee thou'st a guest that overweepeth, yet
Only because thou jokest overwell.

A DISCOURAGING MODEL

JUST the airiest, fairiest slip of a thing,
With a Gainsborough hat, like a butterfly's wing,
Tilted up at one side with the jauntiest air,
And a knot of red roses sewn in under there
Where the shadows are lost in her hair.

Then a cameo face, carven in on a ground
Of that shadowy hair where the roses are wound;
And the gleam of a smile, O as fair and as faint
And as sweet as the masters of old used to paint
Round the lips of their favorite saint!

And that lace at her throat—and the fluttering hands
Snowing there, with a grace that no art understands,
The flakes of their touches—first fluttering at
The bow—then the roses—the hair—and then that
Little tilt of the Gainsborough hat.

Ah, what artist on earth with a model like this,
Holding not on his palette the tint of a kiss,
Nor a pigment to hint of the hue of her hair
Nor the gold of her smile—O what artist could dare
To expect a result half so fair?

THE SERENADE

THE midnight is not more bewildering
To her drowsed eyes, than, to her ears, the sound
Of dim, sweet singing voices, interwound
With purl of flute and subtle twang of string,
Strained through the lattice, where the roses cling
And, with their fragrance, waft the notes around
Her haunted senses. Thirsting beyond bound
Of her slow-yielding dreams, the lilt and swing
Of the mysterious, delirious tune,
She drains like some strange opiate, with awed eyes
Upraised against her casement, where, aswoon,
The stars fail from her sight, and up the skies
Of alien azure rolls the full round moon
Like some vast bubble blown of summer noon.

DOC SIFERS

OF all the doctors I could cite you to in this-'ere
town
Doc Sifers is my favorite, jes' take him up and
down!
Count in the Bethel Neighberhood, and Rollins,
and Big Bear,
And Sifers' standin' jes' as good as ary doctor's
there!

There's old Doc Wick, and Glenn, and Hall, and
Wurgler, and McVeigh,
But I'll buck Sifers 'g'inst 'em all and down 'em
any day!
Most old Wick ever knowed, I s'pose, was *whisky!*
Wurgler—well,
He et morphine—ef actions shows, and facts' re-
liable!

But Sifers—though he ain't no sot, he's got his
faults; and yit
When you *git* Sifers onc't, you've got *a doctor,*
don't fergit!

He ain't much at his office, er his house, er anywhere
You'd natchurly think certain fer to ketch the feller there.—

But don't blame Doc: he's got all sorts o' cur'ous notions—as
The feller says, his odd-come-shorts, like smart men mostly has.
He'll more'n like be potter'n' 'round the Blacksmith Shop; er in
Some back lot, spadin' up the ground, er gradin' it ag'in.

Er at the work bench, planin' things; er buildin' little traps
To ketch birds; galvenizin' rings; er graftin' plums, perhaps.
Make anything! good as the best!—a gun-stock—er a flute;
He whittled out a set o' chesstmen onc't o' laurel root.

Durin' the Army—got his trade o' surgeon there—I own
To-day a finger-ring Doc made out of a Sesesh bone!
An' glued a fiddle onc't fer me—jes' all so busted you
'D 'a' throwed the thing away, but he fixed her as good as new!

And take Doc, now, in *ager,* say, er *biles,* er *rheumatiz,*
And all afflictions thataway, and he's the best they is!
Er janders—milksick—I don't keer—k-yore anything he tries—
A abscess; getherin' in yer yeer; er granilated eyes!

There was the Widder Daubenspeck they all give up fer dead;
A blame cowbuncle on her neck, and clean out of her head!
First had this doctor, what's-his-name, from "Pudblesburg," and then
This little red-head, "Burnin' Shame" they call him —Dr. Glenn.

And they "consulted" on the case, and claimed she'd haf to die,—
I jes' was joggin' by the place, and heerd her dorter cry,
And stops and calls her to the fence; and I-says-I, "Let me
Send Sifers—bet you fifteen cents he'll k-yore her!" "Well," says she,

"Light out!" she says: And, lipp-tee-cut, I loped in town, and rid
'Bout two hours more to find him, but I kussed him when I did!

He was down at the Gunsmith Shop a-stuffin' birds!
Says he,
"My sulky's broke." Says I, "You hop right on and
ride with me!"

I got him there.—"Well, Aunty, ten days k'yores
you," Sifers said,
"But what's yer idy livin' when yer jes' as good as
dead?"
And there's Dave Banks—jes' back from war with-
out a scratch—one day
Got ketched up in a sickle-bar, a reaper runaway.—

His shoulders, arms, and hands and legs jes' sawed
in strips! And Jake
Dunn starts fer Sifers—feller begs to shoot him fer
God-sake.
Doc, 'course, was gone, but he had penned the no-
tice, "At Big Bear—
Be back to-morry; Gone to 'tend the Bee Conven-
tion there."

But Jake, he tracked him—rid and rode the whole
endurin' night!
And 'bout the time the roosters crowed they both
hove into sight.
Doc had to ampitate, but 'greed to save Dave's arms,
and swore
He could 'a' saved his legs ef he'd b'en there the day
before.

Like when his wife's own mother died 'fore Sifers
could be found,
And all the neighbers fer and wide a' all jes' chasin'
round;
Tel finally—I had to laugh—it's jes' like Doc, you
know,—
Was learnin' fer to telegraph, down at the old deepo.

But all they're faultin' Sifers fer, there's none of
'em kin say
He's biggoty, er keerless, er not posted any way;
He ain't built on the common plan of doctors now-
adays,
He's jes' a great, big, brainy man—that's where
the trouble lays!

AFTERWHILES

WHERE are they—the Afterwhiles—
Luring us the lengthening miles
Of our lives? Where is the dawn
With the dew across the lawn
Stroked with eager feet the far
Way the hills and valleys are?
Where the sun that smites the frown
Of the eastward-gazer down?
Where the rifted wreaths of mist
O'er us, tinged with amethyst,
Round the mountain's steep defiles?
Where are all the afterwhiles?

Afterwhile—and we will go
Thither, yon, and to and fro—
From the stifling city streets
To the country's cool retreats—
From the riot to the rest
Where hearts beat the placidest:
Afterwhile, and we will fall
Under breezy trees, and loll
In the shade, with thirsty sight
Drinking deep the blue delight
Of the skies that will beguile
Us as children—afterwhile.

Afterwhile—and one intends
To be gentler to his friends,—
To walk with them, in the hush
Of still evenings, o'er the plush
Of home-leading fields, and stand
Long at parting, hand in hand:
One, in time, will joy to take
New resolves for some one's sake,
And wear then the look that lies
Clear and pure in other eyes—
He will soothe and reconcile
His own conscience—afterwhile.

Afterwhile—we have in view
A far scene to journey to,—
Where the old home is, and where
The old mother waits us there,
Peering, as the time grows late,
Down the old path to the gate.—
How we'll click the latch that locks
In the pinks and hollyhocks,
And leap up the path once more
Where she waits us at the door!—
How we'll greet the dear old smile,
And the warm tears—afterwhile!

Ah, the endless afterwhiles!—
Leagues on leagues, and miles on miles,
In the distance far withdrawn,
Stretching on, and on, and on,
Till the fancy is footsore

And faints in the dust before
The last milestone's granite face,
Hacked with: Here Beginneth Space.
O far glimmering worlds and wings,
Mystic smiles and beckonings,
Lead us through the shadowy aisles,
Out into the afterwhiles.

A HOME-MADE FAIRY TALE

BUD, come here to your uncle a spell,
And I'll tell you something you mustn't tell—
For it's a secret and shore-'nuf true,
And maybe I oughtn't to tell it to you!—
But out in the garden, under the shade
Of the apple trees, where we romped and played
Till the moon was up, and you thought I'd gone
Fast asleep,—That was all put on!
For I was a-watchin' something queer
Goin' on there in the grass, my dear!—
'Way down deep in it, there I see
A little dude-Fairy who winked at me,
And snapped his fingers, and laughed as low
And fine as the whine of a mus-kee-to!
I kept still—watchin' him closer—and
I noticed a little guitar in his hand,
Which he leant 'g'inst a little dead bee—and laid
His cigarette down on a clean grass-blade,
And then climbed up on the shell of a snail—
Carefully dusting his swallowtail—
And pulling up, by a waxed web-thread,
This little guitar, you remember, I said!
And there he trinkled and trilled a tune,—

"My Love, so Fair, Tans in the Moon!"
Till, presently, out of the clover-top
He seemed to be singing to, came, k'pop!
The purtiest, daintiest Fairy face
In all this world, or any place!
Then the little ser'nader waved his hand,
As much as to say, "We'll excuse *you!*" and
I heard, as I squinted my eyelids to,
A kiss like the drip of a drop of dew!

A VOICE FROM THE FARM

IT is my dream to have you here with me,
Out of the heated city's dust and din—
Here where the colts have room to gambol in,
And kine to graze, in clover to the knee.
I want to see your wan face happily
Lit with the wholesome smiles that have not been
In use since the old games you used to win
When we pitched horseshoes: And I want to be
At utter loaf with you in this dim land
Of grove and meadow, while the crickets make
Our own talk tedious, and the bat wields
His bulky flight, as we cease converse and
In a dusk like velvet smoothly take
Our way toward home across the dewy fields.

THE OLD HOME BY THE MILL

THIS is "The old Home by the Mill"—fer we
still call it so,
Although the *old mill,* roof and sill, is all gone long
ago.
The old home, though, and the old folks—the old
spring, and a few
Old cattails, weeds and hartychokes, is left to wel-
come you!

Here, Marg'et!—fetch the man a *tin* to drink out
of! Our spring
Keeps kindo'-sorto' cavin' in, but don't *"taste"*
anything!
She's kindo' *agin',* Marg'et is—"the *old* process"—
like me,
All ham-stringed up with rhumatiz, and on in
seventy-three.

Jest me and Marg'et lives alone here—like in long
ago;
The childern all putt off and gone, and married,
don't you know?

One's millin' 'way out West somewhare; two other
miller-boys
In Minnyopolis they air; and one's in Illinoise.

The *oldest* gyrl—the first that went—married and
died right here;
The next lives in Winn's Settlement—fer purt' nigh
thirty year!
And youngest one—was allus fer the old home
here—but no!—
Her man turns in and he packs *her* 'way off to
Idyho!

I don't miss them like *Marg'et* does—'cause I got
her, you see;
And when she pines for them—that's 'cause *she's*
only jest got *me!*
I laugh, and joke her 'bout it all.—But talkin' sense,
I'll say,
When she was tuk so bad last Fall, I laughed then
t'other way!

I hain't so favor'ble impressed 'bout *dyin';* but ef I
Found I was only second-best when *us two* come to
die,
I'd 'dopt the "new process," in full, ef *Marg'et*
died, you see,—
I'd jest crawl in my grave and pull the green grass
over me!

THE OLD MAN AND JIM

OLD man never had much to say—
'Ceptin' to Jim,—
And Jim was the wildest boy he had—
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!
Never heerd him speak but once
Er twice in my life,—and first time was
When the army broke out, and Jim he went,
The old man backin' him, fer three months;
And all 'at I heerd the old man say
Was, jes' as we turned to start away,—
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

'Peared-like, he was more satisfied
Jes' *lookin'* at Jim
And likin' him all to hisse'f-like, see?—
'Cause he was jes' wrapped up in him!
And over and over I mind the day
The old man come and stood round in the way
While we was drillin', a-watchin' Jim—
And down at the deepot a-heerin' him say,
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Never was nothin' about the *farm*
  Disting'ished Jim;
Neighbors all ust to wonder why
  The old man 'peared wrapped up in him:
But when Cap. Biggler he writ back
'At Jim was the bravest boy we had
In the whole dern rigiment, white er black,
And his fightin' good as his farmin' bad—
'At he had led, with a bullet clean
Bored through his thigh, and carried the flag
Through the bloodiest battle you ever seen.—
The old man wound up a letter to him
'At Cap. read to us, 'at said: "Tell Jim
    Good-by,
      And take keer of hisse'f!"

Jim come home jes' long enough
  To take the whim
'At he'd like to go back in the calvery—
  And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!
Jim 'lowed 'at he'd had sich luck afore,
Guessed he'd tackle her three years more.
And the old man give him a colt he'd raised,
And follered him over to Camp Ben Wade,
And laid around fer a week er so,
Watchin' Jim on dress-parade—
Tel finally he rid away,
And last he heerd was the old man say,—
  "Well, good-by, Jim:
    Take keer of yourse'f!"

"Jim 'lowed 'at he'd had sich luck afore,
Guessed he'd tackle her three years more"

Tuk the papers, the old man did,
A-watchin' fer Jim—
Fully believin' he'd make his mark
Some way—jes' wrapped up in him!—
And many a time the word 'u'd come
'At stirred him up like the tap of a drum—
At Petersburg, fer instunce, where
Jim rid right into their cannons there,
And *tuk* 'em, and p'inted 'em t'other way,
And socked it home to the boys in gray,
As they scooted fer timber, and on and on—
Jim a lieutenant and one arm gone,
And the old man's words in his mind all day,—
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Think of a private, now, perhaps,
We'll say like Jim,
'At's clumb clean up to the shoulder-straps—
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!
Think of him—with the war plum' through,
And the glorious old Red-White-and-Blue
A-laughin' the news down over Jim,
And the old man, bendin' over him—
The surgeon turnin' away with tears
'At hadn't leaked fer years and years,
As the hand of the dyin' boy clung to
His father's, the old voice in his ears,—
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

OUR OLD FRIEND NEVERFAIL

O IT'S good to ketch a relative 'at's richer and
don't run
When you holler out to hold up, and'll joke and
have his fun;
It's good to hear a man called bad and then find out
he's not,
Er strike some chap they call lukewarm 'at's really
red-hot;
It's good to know the Devil's painted jes' a leetle
black,
And it's good to have most anybody pat you on the
back;—
But jes' the best thing in the world's our old friend
Neverfail,
When he wags yer hand as honest as an old dog
wags his tail!

I like to strike the man I owe the same time I can
pay,
And take back things I've borried, and su'prise folks
thataway;
I like to find out that the man I voted fer last fall,
That didn't git elected, was a scoundrel after all;

I like the man that likes the pore and he'ps 'em when
he can;
I like to meet a ragged tramp 'at's still a gentleman;
But most I like—with you, my boy—our old friend
Neverfail,
When he wags yer hand as honest as an old dog
wags his tail!

DAN O'SULLIVAN

DAN O'SULLIVAN: It's your
Lips have kissed "The Blarney," sure!—
To be trillin' praise av me,
Dhrippin' swhate wid poethry!—
Not that I'd not have ye sing—
Don't lave off for anything—
Jusht be aisy whilst the fit
Av me head shwells up to it!

Dade and thrue, I'm not the man,
Whilst yer singin', loike ye can,
To cry shtop because ye've blesht
My songs more than all the resht:—
I'll not be the b'y to ax
Any shtar to wane or wax,
Or ax any clock that's woun'
To run up inshtid av down!

Whist yez! Dan O'Sullivan!—
Him that made the Irishman
Mixt the birds in wid the dough,
And the dew and mistletoe

Wid the whusky in the quare
Muggs av us—and here we air,
Three parts right, and three parts wrong,
Shpiked wid beauty, wit and song!

AT "THE LITERARY"

FOLKS in town, I reckon, thinks
They git all the fun they air
Runnin' loose 'round!—but, 'y jinks!
We' got fun, and fun to spare,
Right out here amongst the ash
And oak timber ever'where!
Some folks else kin cut a dash
'Sides town-people, don't fergit!—
'Specially in *winter*-time,
When they's snow, and roads is fit.
In them circumstances I'm
Resig-nated to my lot—
Which putts me in mind o' what
'S called "The Literary."

Us folks in the country sees
Lots o' fun!—Take spellin'-school;
Er ole hoe-down jamborees;
Er revivals; er ef you'll
Tackle taffy-pullin's you
Kin git fun, and quite a few!—
Same with huskin's. But all these
Kind o' frolics they hain't new

By a hunderd year' er two
Cipher on it as you please!
But I'll tell you what I jest
Think walks over all the rest—
Anyway it suits *me* best,—
That's "The Literary."

First they started it—"'y gee!"
Thinks-says-I, "this settle-ment
'S gittin' too high-toned fer me!"
But when all begin to jine,
And I heerd *Izory* went,
I jest kind o' drapped in line,
Like you've seen some sandy, thin,
Scrawny shoat putt fer the crick
Down some pig-trail through the thick
Spice-bresh, where the whole drove's been
'Bout six weeks 'fore he gits in!—
"Can't tell nothin'," I-says-ee,
"'Bout it tel you go and see
Their blame 'Literary'!"

Very first night I was there
I was 'p'inted to be what
They call "Critic"—so's a fair
And square jedgment could be got
On the pieces 'at was read,
And on the debate,—"Which air
Most destructive element,
Fire er worter?" Then they hed
Compositions on "Content,"

"Death," and "Botany"; and Tomps
He read one on "Dreenin' Swamps"
I p'nounced the boss, and said,
"*So* fur, 'at's the best thing read
In yer 'Literary'!"

Then they *sung* some—tel I called
Order, and got back ag'in
In the critic's cheer, and hauled
All o' the p'formers in:—
Mandy Brizendine read one
I fergit; and Doc's was "Thought";
And Sarepty's, hern was "None
Air Denied 'at Knocks"; and Daut—
Fayette Strawnse's little niece—
She got up and spoke a piece:
Then Izory she read hern—
"Best thing in the whole concern,"
I-says-ee; "now le' 's adjourn
This-here 'Literary'!"

They was some contendin'—yit
We broke up in harmony.
Road outside as white as grit,
And as slick as slick could be!—
I'd fetched 'Zory in my sleigh,—
And I had a heap to say,
Drivin' back—in fact, I driv
'Way around the old north way,
Where the Daubenspeckses live.
'Zory allus—'fore that night—

Never 'peared to feel jest right
In my company.—You see,
On'y thing on earth saved me
Was that "Literary"!

SHE "DISPLAINS" IT

"HAD, too!"
"Hadn't, neither!"
So contended Bess and May—
Neighbor children, who were boasting
Of their grandmammas, one day.

"Had, too!"
"Hadn't, neither!"
All the difference begun
By May's saying she'd *two* grandmas—
While poor Bess had only one.

"Had, too!"
"Hadn't, neither!"
Tossing curls, and kinks of friz!—
"How could you have *two* gran'muvvers
When ist *one* is all they is?"

"Had, too!"
"Hadn't, neither!—
'Cause ef you had *two,"* said Bess,
"You'd *displain* it!" Then May answered,
"My gran'mas wuz *twins,* I guess!"

DEAD, MY LORDS

DEAD, my lords and gentlemen!—
Stilled the tongue, and stayed the pen;
Cheek unflushed and eye unlit—
Done with life, and glad of it.

Curb your praises now as then:
Dead, my lords and gentlemen.—
What he wrought found its reward
In the tolerance of the Lord.

Ye who fain had barred his path,
Dread ye now this look he hath?—
Dead, my lords and gentlemen—
Dare ye not smile back again?

Low he lies, yet high and great
Looms he, lying thus in state.—
How exalted o'er ye when
Dead, my lords and gentlemen!

A MAN BY THE NAME OF BOLUS

A MAN by the name of Bolus—(all 'at we'll ever know
Of the stranger's name, I reckon—and I'm kind o' glad it's so!)—
Got off here, Christmas morning, looked 'round the town, and then
Kind o' sized up the folks, I guess, and—went away again!

The fac's is, this man Bolus got "run in," Christmas-day;
The town turned out to see it, and cheered, and blocked the way;
And they dragged him 'fore the Mayor—fer he couldn't er *wouldn't* walk—
And socked him down fer trial—though he couldn't er *wouldn't* talk!

Drunk? They was no doubt of it!—W'y, the marshal of the town
Laughed and testified 'at he fell *up*-stairs 'stid o' *down!*

This man by the name of Bolus?—W'y, he even
drapped his jaw
And snored on through his "hearin' "—drunk as
you ever saw!

One feller spit in his boot-leg, and another 'n'
drapped a small
Little chunk o' ice down his collar,—but he didn't
wake at all!
And they all nearly split when his Honor said, in
one of his witty ways,
To "chalk it down fer him, 'Called away—be back
in thirty days!' "

That's where this man named Bolus slid, kind o'
like in a fit,
Flat on the floor; and—drat my ears! I hear 'em
a-laughin' yit!
Somebody fetched Doc Sifers from jes' acrost the
hall—
And all Doc said was, "Morphine! We're too late!"
and that's all!

That's how they found his name out—piece of a
letter 'at read:
"Your wife has lost her reason, and little Nathan's
dead—
Come ef you kin,—fergive *her*—but, Bolus, as fer
me,
This hour I send a bullet through where my heart
ort to be!"

Man by the name of Bolus!—As his revilers broke
Fer the open air, 'peared-like, to me, I heerd a voice
'at spoke—
Man by the name of Bolus! git up from where you lay—
Git up and smile white at 'em, with your hands crossed thataway!

THE TRAVELING MAN

I

COULD I pour out the nectar the gods only can,
I would fill up my glass to the brim
And drink the success of the Traveling Man,
And the house represented by him;
And could I but tincture the glorious draught
With his smiles, as I drank to him then,
And the jokes he has told and the laughs he has laughed,
I would fill up the goblet again—

And drink to the sweetheart who gave him good-by
With a tenderness thrilling him this
Very hour, as he thinks of the tear in her eye
That salted the sweet of her kiss;
To her truest of hearts and her fairest of hands
I would drink, with all serious prayers,
Since the heart she must trust is a Traveling Man's,
And as warm as the ulster he wears.

II

I would drink to the wife, with the babe on her knee,
Who awaits his returning in vain—
Who breaks his brave letters so tremulously
And reads them again and again!
And I'd drink to the feeble old mother who sits
At the warm fireside of her son
And murmurs and weeps o'er the stocking she knits,
As she thinks of the wandering one.

I would drink a long life and a health to the friends
Who have met him with smiles and with cheer—
To the generous hand that the landlord extends
To the wayfarer journeying here:
And I pledge, when he turns from this earthly abode
And pays the last fare that he can,
Mine Host of the Inn at the End of the Road
Will welcome the Traveling Man!

THE ABSENCE OF LITTLE WESLEY

SENCE little Wesley went, the place seems all
so strange and still—
W'y, I miss his yell o' "Gran-pap!" as I'd miss the
whipperwill!
And to think I ust to *scold* him fer his everlastin'
noise,
When I on'y rickollect him as the best o' little boys!
I wisht a hunderd times a day 'at he'd come tromp-
in' in,
And all the noise he ever made was twic't as loud
ag'in!—
It 'u'd seem like some soft music played on some
fine insturment,
'Longside o' this loud lonesomeness, sence little
Wesley went!

Of course the clock don't tick no louder than it ust
to do—
Yit now they's times it 'pears like it 'u'd bu'st
itse'f in two!
And let a rooster, suddent-like, crow som'ers clos't
around,
And seems's ef, mighty nigh it, it 'u'd lift me off the
ground!

And same with all the cattle when they bawl around
the bars,
In the red o' airly morning, er the dusk and dew and
stars,
When the neighbers' boys 'at passes never stop, but
jes' go on,
A-whistlin' kind o' to theirse'v's—sence little Wes-
ley's gone!

And then, o' nights, when Mother's settin' up on-
common late,
A-bilin' pears er somepin', and I set and smoke and
wait,
Tel the moon out through the winder don't look
bigger'n a dime,
And things keeps gittin' stiller—stiller—stiller all
the time,—
I've ketched myse'f a-wishin' like—as I clumb on
the cheer
To wind the clock, as I hev done fer more'n fifty
year—
A-wishin' 'at the time hed come fer us to go to bed,
With our last prayers, and our last tears, sence little
Wesley's dead!

WHEN THE GREEN GITS BACK IN THE TREES

IN spring, when the green gits back in the trees,
And the sun comes out and *stays,*
And yer boots pulls on with a good tight squeeze,
And you think of yer barefoot days;
When you *ort* to work and you want to *not,*
And you and yer wife agrees
It's time to spade up the garden-lot,
When the green gits back in the trees—
Well! work is the least o' *my* idees
When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!

When the green gits back in the trees, and bees
Is a-buzzin' aroun' ag'in
In that kind of a lazy go-as-you-please
Old gait they bum roun' in;
When the groun's all bald whare the hay-rick stood,
And the crick's riz, and the breeze
Coaxes the bloom in the old dogwood,
And the green gits back in the trees,—
I like, as I say, in sich scenes as these,
The time when the green gits back in the trees!

When the whole tail-fethers o' Winter-time
  Is all pulled out and gone!
And the sap it thaws and begins to climb,
  And the swet it starts out on
A feller's forred, a-gittin' down
  At the old spring on his knees—
I kindo' like jest a-loaferin' roun'
  When the green gits back in the trees—
    Jest a-potterin' roun' as I—durn—please—
    When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!

HOW IT HAPPENED

I GOT to *thinkin'* of her—both her parunts dead
and gone—
And all her sisters married off, and none but her and
John
A-livin' all alone thare in that lonesome sorto' way,
And him a blame' old bachelor, confirm'der ev'ry
day!
I'd knowed 'em all, from childern, and theyr daddy
from the time
He settled in the neghborhood, and hadn't ary a
dime
Er dollar, when he married, fer to start housekeepin'
on!—
So I got to *thinkin'* of her—both her parunts dead
and gone!

I got to *thinkin'* of her; and a-wundern what *she*
done
That all *her sisters* kep' a-gittin' married, one by
one,
And her without *no* chances—and the best girl of
the pack—
A' old maid, with her hands, you might say, tied
behind her back!

And *Mother,* too, afore she died,—*she* ust to jest
take on,
When none of 'em wuz left, you know, but Evaline
and John,
And jest declare to goodness 'at the young men must
be bline
To not see what a wife they'd git ef they got
Evaline!

I got to *thinkin'* of her: In my great affliction she
Wuz sich a comfert to us, and so kind and negh-
borly,—
She'd come, and leave her housework, fer to he'p
out little Jane,
And talk of *her own* mother 'at she'd never see
again—
They'd sometimes *cry* together—though, fer the
most part, she
Would have the child so rickonciled and happy-like
'at we
Felt lonesomer'n ever when she'd putt her bonnet on
And say she'd railly *haf* to be a-gittin' back to John!

I got to *thinkin'* of her, as I say,—and more and
more
I'd think of her dependence, and the burdens 'at
she bore,—
Her parunts both a-bein' dead, and all her sisters
gone
And married off, and her a-livin' thare alone with
John—

You might say jest a-toilin' and a-slavin' out her life
Fer a man 'at hadn't pride enugh to git hisse'f a wife—
'Less some one married *Evaline* and packed her off some day!—
So I got to *thinkin'* of her—and—It happened *thataway.*

GLADNESS

MY ole man named Silas: he
Dead long 'fo' ole Gin'l Lee
S'rendah, whense de wah wuz done.
Yanks dey tuk de plantation—
Mos' high-handed evah you see!—
Das rack round', an' fiah an' bu'n,
An' jab de beds wid deir bay-net-gun,
An' sweah we niggahs all scotch-free,—
An' Massah John C. Pemberton
Das tuk an' run!

"Gord Armighty, marm," he 'low,
"He'p you an' de chillen now!"
Blaze crack out 'n de roof inside
Tel de big house all das charified!
Smoke roll out 'n de ole haymow
An' de wa'house do'—an' de fiah das roah—
An' all dat 'backer, 'bout half dried,
Hit smell das fried!

Nelse, my ol'est boy, an' John,—
Atter de baby das wuz bo'n,
Erlongse dem times, an' lak ter 'a' died,
An' Silas he be'n slip an' gone

'Bout eight weeks ter de Union side,—
Dem two boys dey start fo' ter fine
An' jine deir fader acrost de line.
Ovahseeah he wade an' tromp
Eveh-which-way fo' to track 'em down—
Sic de bloodhoun' fro' de swamp—
An' bring de news dat John he drown'—
But dey save de houn'!

Someway ner Nelse git fru'
An' fight fo' de ole Red, White, an' Blue,
Lak his fader is, ter er heart's delight—
An' nen crope back wid de news, one night—
Sayes, "Fader's killed in a scrimmage-fight,
An' saunt farewell ter ye all, an' sayes
Fo' ter name de baby 'Gladness,' 'caze
Mighty nigh she 'uz be'n borned free!"
An' de boy he smile so strange at me
I sayes, "Yo' 's hurt *yo'se'f!*" an' he
Sayes, "I's killed, too—an' dat's all else!"
An' dah lay Nelse!

Hope an' Angrish, de twins, be'n sole
'Fo' dey mo' 'n twelve year ole:
An' Mary Magdaline sole too.
An' dah I's lef', wid Knox-Andrew,
An' Lily, an' Maje, an' Margaret,
An' little gal-babe, 'at's borned dat new
She scaisely ole fo' ter be named yet—
Less'n de name 'at Si say to—
An' co'se hit *do*.

An' I taken dem chillen, evah one
(An' a-oh my Mastah's will be done!),
An' I break fo' de Norf, whah dey all raised free
(An' a-oh good Mastah, come git me!).
Knox-Andrew, on de day he died,
Lef' his fambly er shop an' er lot berside;
An' Maje die ownin' er team—an' he
Lef' all ter me.

Lily she work at de Gran' Hotel—
(Mastah! Mastah! take me—do!)—
An' Lily she ain' married well:
He stob a man—an' she die too;
An' Margaret she too full er pride
Ter own her kin tel er day she died!
But Gladness!—'t ain' soun' sho'-nuff true,—
But she teached school!—an' er white folks, too,
Ruspec' dat gal 'mos' high ez I do!—
'Caze she 'uz de bes' an' de mos' high bred—
De las' chile bo'n, an' de las chile dead,
O' all ten head!

. . . . . .

Gladness! Gladness! a-oh my chile!
Wa'm my soul in yo' sweet smile!
Daughter o' Silas! o-rise an' sing
Tel er heart-beat pat lak er pigeon-wing!
Sayes, O Gladness! wake dem eyes—
Sayes, a-lif' dem folded han's, an' rise—
Sayes, a-coax me erlong ter Paradise,
An' a-hail de King,
O Gladness!

THE WIFE-BLESSÈD

IN youth he wrought, with eyes ablur,
Lorn-faced and long of hair—
In youth—in youth he painted her
A sister of the air—
Could clasp her not, but felt the stir
Of pinions everywhere.

She lured his gaze, in braver days,
And tranced him siren-wise;
And he did paint her, through a haze
Of sullen paradise,
With scars of kisses on her face
And embers in her eyes.

And now—nor dream nor wild conceit—
Though faltering, as before—
Through tears he paints her, as is meet,
Tracing the dear face o'er
With lilied patience meek and sweet
As Mother Mary wore.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

WHAT intuition named thee?—Through what thrill
Of the awed soul came the command divine
Into the mother-heart, foretelling thine
Should palpitate with his whose raptures will
Sing on while daisies bloom and lavrocks trill
Their undulating ways up through the fine
Fair mists of heavenly reaches? Thy pure line
Falls as the dew of anthems, quiring still
The sweeter since the Scottish singer raised
His voice therein, and, quit of every stress
Of earthly ache and longing and despair,
Knew certainly each simple thing he praised
Was no less worthy, for its lowliness,
Than any joy of all the glory There.

'MONGST THE HILLS O' SOMERSET

'MONGST the Hills o' Somerset
Wisht I was a-roamin' yet!
My feet won't get usen to
These low lands I'm trompin' through.
Wisht I could go back there, and
Stroke the long grass with my hand,
Kind o' like my sweetheart's hair
Smoothed out underneath it there!
Wisht I could set eyes once more
On our shadders, on before,
Climbin', in the airly dawn,
Up the slopes 'at love growed on
Natchurl as the violet
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

How 't 'u'd rest a man like me
Jes' fer 'bout an hour to be
Up there where the morning air
Could reach out and ketch me there!—
Snatch my breath away, and then
Rensh and give it back again
Fresh as dew, and smellin' of
The old pinks I ust to love,

And a-flavor'n' ever' breeze
With mixt hints o' mulberries
And May-apples, from the thick
Bottom-lands along the crick
Where the fish bit, dry er wet,
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Like a livin' pictur' things
All comes back: the bluebird swings
In the maple, tongue and bill
Trillin' glory fit to kill!
In the orchard, jay and bee
Ripens the first pears fer me,
And the "Prince's Harvest" they
Tumble to me where I lay
In the clover, provin' still
"A boy's will is the wind's will."
Clean fergot is time, and care,
And thick hearin', and gray hair—
But they's nothin' I ferget
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Middle-aged—to be edzact,
Very middle-aged, in fact,
Yet a-thinkin' back to then,
I'm the same wild boy again!
There's the dear old home once more,
And there's Mother at the door—
Dead, I know, fer thirty year',
Yet she's singin', and I hear;
And there's Jo, and Mary Jane,

And Pap, comin' up the lane!
Dusk's a-fallin'; and the dew,
'Pears like, it's a-fallin' too—
Dreamin' we're all livin' yet
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

'A PASSING HAIL'

LET us rest ourselves a bit!
Worry?—Wave your hand to it—
Kiss your finger-tips and smile
It farewell a little while.

Weary of the weary way
We have come from Yesterday,
Let us fret us not, instead,
Of the weary way ahead.

Let us pause and catch our breath
On the hither side of death,
While we see the tender shoots
Of the grasses—not the roots,—

While we yet look down—not up—
To seek out the buttercup
And the daisy where they wave
O'er the green home of the grave.

Let us launch us smoothly on
The soft billows of the lawn,
And drift out across the main
Of our childish dreams again:

Voyage off, beneath the trees,
O'er the field's enchanted seas,
Where the lilies are our sails,
And our sea-gulls, nightingales:

Where no wilder storm shall beat
Than the wind that waves the wheat,
And no tempest-burst above
The old laughs we used to love:

Lose all troubles—gain release,
Languor, and exceeding peace,
Cruising idly o'er the vast,
Calm mid-ocean of the Past.

Let us rest ourselves a bit!
Worry?—wave your hand to it—
Kiss your finger-tips, and smile
It farewell a little while.

"LAST CHRISTMAS WAS A YEAR AGO"

The Old Lady Speaks

LAST Christmas was a year ago,
Says I to David, I-says-I,
"We're goin' to morning-service, so
You hitch up right away: I'll try
To tell the girls jes' what to do
Fer dinner.—We'll be back by two."
I didn't wait to hear what he
Would more'n like say back to me,
But banged the stable door and flew
Back to the house, jes' plumb chilled through.

Cold! *Wooh!* how cold it was! My-oh!
Frost flyin', and the air, you know,
"Jes' sharp enough," heerd David swear,
"To shave a man and cut his hair!"
And blow and blow! and snow and snow!—
Where it had drifted 'long the fence
And 'crost the road,—some places, though,
Jes' swep' clean to the gravel, so
The goin' was as bad fer sleighs
As 'twas fer wagons,—and both ways,

'Twixt snow-drifts and the bare ground, I've
Jes' wundered we got through alive;
I hain't saw nothin', 'fore er sence,
'At beat it anywheres, I know—
Last Christmas was a year ago.

And David said, as we set out,
'At Christmas services was 'bout
As cold and wuthless kind o' love
To offer up as he knowed of;
And as fer him, he railly thought
'At the Good Bein' up above
Would think more of us—as He ought—
A-stayin' home on sich a day,
And thankin' of Him thataway!
And jawed on, in a' undertone,
'Bout leavin' Lide and Jane alone
There on the place, and me not there
To oversee 'em, and p'pare
The stuffin' fer the turkey, and
The sass and all, you understand.

I've allus managed David by
Jes' sayin' *nothin'*. That was why
He'd chased Lide's beau away—'cause Lide
She'd allus take up Perry's side
When David tackled him; and so,
Last Christmas was a year ago,—
Er ruther, 'bout *a week afore*,—
David and Perry'd quarr'l'd about

Some tom-fool argyment, you know,
And Pap told him to "Jes' git out
O' there, and not to come no more,
And, when he went, to shet the door!"
And as he passed the winder, we
Saw Perry, white as white could be,
March past, onhitch his hoss, and light
A see-gyar, and lope out o' sight.
Then Lide she come to me and cried!
And I said nothin'—was no need.
And yit, you know, that man jes' got
Right out o' there's ef he'd be'n shot,
P'tendin' he must go and feed
The stock er somepin'. Then I tried
To git the pore girl pacified.

But, gittin' back to—where was we?—
Oh, yes!—where David lectered me
All way to meetin', high and low,
Last Christmas was a year ago:
Fer all the awful cold, they was
A fair attendunce; mostly, though,
The crowd was round the stoves, you see,
Thawin' their heels and scrougin' us.
Ef 't 'adn't be'n fer the old Squire
Givin' *his* seat to us, as in
We stomped, a-fairly perishin',
And David could 'a' got no fire,
He'd jes' 'a' drapped there in his tracks:
And Squire, as I was tryin' to yit
Make room fer him, says, "No; the fac's

Is, *I* got to git up and git
'Ithout no preachin'. Jes' got word—
Trial fer life—can't be deferred!"
And out he putt!

. . . . . And all way through
The sermont—and a long one, too—
I couldn't he'p but think o' Squire
And us changed round so, and admire
His gintle ways,—to give his warm
Bench up, and have to face the storm.
And when I noticed David he
Was needin' jabbin'—I thought best
To kind o' sort o' let him rest:
'Peared-like he slep' so peacefully!
And then I thought o' home, and how
And what the gyrls was doin' now,
And kind o' prayed, 'way in my breast,
And breshed away a tear er two
As David waked, and church was through.

By time we'd "howdyed" round and shuck
Hands with the neighbers, must 'a' tuck
A half-hour longer: ever' one
A-sayin' "Christmas gift!" afore
David er me—so we got none!
But David warmed up, more and more,
And got so jokey-like, and had
His sperits up, and 'peared so glad,
I whispered to him, "S'pose you ast
A passel of 'em come and eat

Their dinners with us. Gyrls's got
A full-and-plenty fer the lot
And all their kin!" So David passed
The invite round: and ever' seat
In ever' wagon-bed and sleigh
Was jes' packed, as we rode away,—
The young folks, mil'd er so along,
A-strikin' up a sleighin'-song,
Tel David laughed and yelled, you know,
And jes' whirped up and sent the snow
And gravel flyin' thick and fast—
Last Christmas was a year ago.
W'y, that-air seven-mil'd ja'nt we come—
Jes' seven mil'd scant from church to home—
It didn't 'pear, *that* day, to be
Much furder railly 'n 'bout *three!*

But I was purty squeamish by
The time home hove in sight and I
See two vehickles standin' there
Already. So says I, *"Prepare!"*
All to myse'f. And presently
David he sobered; and says he,
"Hain't that-air Squire Hanch's old
Buggy," he says, "and claybank mare?"
Says I, "Le' 's git in out the cold—
Your company's nigh 'bout froze!" He says,
"Whose sleigh's that-air, a-standin' there?"
Says I, "It's no odds *whose—you* jes'
Drive to the house and let us out,
'Cause we're jes' *freezin',* nigh about!"

Well, David swung up to the door,
And out we piled. And first I heerd
Jane's voice, then *Lide's,*—I thought afore
I reached that gyrl I'd jes' die, shore;
And *when* I reached her, wouldn't keered
Much ef I had, I was so glad,
A-kissin' her through my green veil,
And jes' excitin' her so bad,
'At *she* broke down *herse'f*—and Jane,
She cried—and we all hugged again.
And *David?*—David jes' turned pale!—
Looked at the gyrls, and then at me,
Then at the open door—and then—
"Is old Squire Hanch in there?" says he.
The old Squire suddently stood in
The doorway, with a sneakin' grin.
"Is Perry Anders in there, too?"
Says David, limberin' all through,
As Lide and me both grabbed him, and
Perry stepped out and waved his hand
And says, "Yes, Pap." And David jes'
Stooped and kissed Lide, and says, "I guess
Yer *mother's* much to blame as you.
Ef *she* kin resk him, I kin too!"

The dinner we had then hain't no
Bit better'n the one to-day
'At we'll have fer 'em! Hear some sleigh
A-jinglin' now. David, fer *me,*
I wish you'd jes' go out and see
Ef they're in sight yit. It jes' does

Me good to think, in times like these,
Lide's done so well. And David he's
More tractabler'n what he was,
Last Christmas was a year ago.

LITTLE JOHNTS'S CHRIS'MUS

WE got it up a-purpose, jes' fer little Johnts,
you know;
His mother was so pore an' all, an' had to manage
so.—
Jes' bein' a War-widder, an' her pension mighty
slim,
She'd take in weavin', er work out, er anything
fer him!

An' little Johnts was puny-like—but law, the *nerve*
he had!—
You'd want to kind o' pity him, but couldn't, very
bad,—
His pants o' army-blanket an' his coat o' faded blue
Kep' hintin' of his father like, an' pity wouldn't do!

So we collogued together onc't, one winter-time, 'at
we—
Jes' me an' Mother an' the girls, and Wilse, John-
Jack an' Free—
Would jine and git up little Johnts, by time 'at
Chris'mus come,
Some sort o' doin's, don't you know, 'at would
su'prise him some.

An' so, all on the quiet, Mother she turns in an' gits
Some blue-janes—cuts an' makes a suit; an' then sets down and knits
A pair o' little galluses to go 'long with the rest—
An' putts in a red-flannen back an' buckle on the vest.—

The little feller'd be'n so much around our house, you see,
An' be'n sich he'p to her an' all, an' handy as could be,
'At Mother couldn't do too much fer little Johnts—No, *sir!*
She ust to jes' declare 'at "he was meat-an'-drink to her!"

An' Piney, Lide, an' Madeline they watch their chance an' rid
To Fountaintown with Lijey's folks; an' bought a book, they did,
O' fairy tales, with pictur's in; an' got a little pair
O' red-top boots 'at John-Jack said he'd be'n a-pricin' there.

An' Lide got him a little sword, an' Madeline, a drum;
An' shootin'-crackers—Lawzy-day! an' they're so danger-some!

An' Piney, ever' time the rest 'ud buy some other toy,
She'd take an' turn in then an' buy more candy fer the boy!

"Well," thinks-says-I, when they got back, "*your* pocketbooks is dry!"—
But little Johnts was there hisse'f that afternoon, so I—
Well, *all* of us kep' mighty mum, tel we got him away
By tellin' him to be shore an' come to-morry—Chris'mus Day—

An' fetch *his mother* 'long with him! An' how he scud acrost
The fields—his towhead, in the dusk, jes' like a streak o' frost!—
His comfert flutter'n' as he run—an' old Tige, don't you know,
A-jumpin' high fer rabbits an' a plowin' up the snow!

It must 'a' be'n 'most *ten* that night afore we got to bed—
With Wilse an' John-Jack he'ppin' us; an' Freeman in the shed,
An' Lide out with the lantern while he trimmed the Chris'mus Tree
Out of a little scrub-oak-top 'at suited to a "T"!

All night I dreamp' o' hearin' things a-skulkin'
round the place—
An' "Old Kriss," with his whiskers off, an' freckles
on his face—
An' reindeers, shaped like shavin'-hosses at the
cooper-shop,
A-stickin' down the chimbly, with their heels out at
the top!

By time 'at Mother got me up 'twas plum daylight
an' more—
The front yard full o' neighbers all a-crowdin'
round the door,
With Johnts's mother leadin'; yes—an' little Johnts
hisse'f,
Set up on Freeman's shoulder, like a jug up on the
she'f!

Of course I can't describe it when they all got in to
where
We'd conjered up the Chris'mus Tree an' all the
fixin's there!—
Fer all the shouts o' laughture—clappin' hands, an'
crackin' jokes,
Was heap o' kissin' goin' on amongst the women-
folks:—

Fer, lo-behold-ye! there they had that young-un!—
An' his chin
A-wobblin'-like;—an', shore enough, at last he
started in—

An'—sich another bellerin', in all my mortal days,
I never heerd, er 'spect to hear, in woe's app'inted ways!

An' Mother grabs him up an' says: "It's more'n he can bear—
It's all too *suddent* fer the child, an' too su'prisin'! —*There!*"
"Oh, no it ain't"—sobbed little Johnts—"I ain't su'prised—but I'm
A-cryin' 'cause I watched you all, an' knowed it all the time!"

THAT-AIR YOUNG-UN

THAT-AIR young-un ust to set
By the crick here day by day.—
Watch the swallers dip and wet
Their slim wings and skoot away;
Watch these little snipes along
The low banks tilt up and down
'Mongst the reeds, and hear the song
Of the bullfrogs croakin' roun':
Ust to set here in the sun
Watchin' things, and listenun,
'Peared-like, mostly to the roar
Of the dam below, er to
That-air riffle nigh the shore
Jes' acrost from me and you.
Ust to watch him from the door
Of the mill.—'Ud rigg him out
With a fishin'-pole and line—
Dig worms fer him—nigh about
Jes' spit on his bait!—but he
Never keered much, 'pearantly,
To ketch fish!—He'd ruther fine

Out some sunny place, and set
Watchin' things, with droopy head,
And "a-listenun," he said—
"Kind o' listenun above
The old crick to what the wet
Warter was a-talkin' of!"

Jevver hear sich talk as that?
Bothered *Mother* more'n me
What the child was cipher'n' at.—
Come home onc't and said 'at he
Knowed what the snake-feeders thought
When they grit their wings; and knowed
Turkle-talk, when bubbles riz
Over where the old roots growed
Where he th'owed them pets o' his—
Little turripuns he caught
In the County Ditch and packed
In his pockets days and days!—
Said he knowed what goslin's quacked—
Could tell what the killdees sayes,
And grasshoppers, when they lit
In the crick and "minnies" bit
Off their legs.—"But, *blame!*" sayes he,
Sort o' lookin' clean above
Mother's head and on through me—
(And them eyes!—I see 'em yet!)—
"Blame!" he sayes, "ef I kin see,
Er make *out,* jes' what the wet
Warter is a-talkin' of!"

Made me *nervous!* Mother, though,
Said best not to scold the child—
The Good Bein' knowed.—And so
We was only rickonciled
When he'd be asleep.—And then,
Time, and time, and time again,
We've watched over him, you know—
Her a-sayin' nothin'—jes'
Kind o' smoothin' back his hair,
And, all to herse'f, I guess,
Studyin' up some kind o' prayer
She ain't tried yet.—Onc't she said,
Cotin' Scriptur', "'He,'" says she,
In a solemn whisper, "'He
Givuth His beloved sleep!'"
And jes' then I heerd the rain
Strike the shingles, as I turned
Res'less to'rds the wall again.
Pity strong men dast to weep!—
Specially when up above
Thrash! the storm comes down, and you
Feel the midnight plum soaked through
Heart and soul, and wunder, too,
What the warter's talkin' of!

. . . . .

Found his hat 'way down below
Hinchman's Ford.—'Ves' Anders he
Rid and fetched it. Mother she
Went *wild* over that, you know—
Hugged it! kissed it!—*Turribul!*

My hopes then was all gone too. . . .
Brung him in, with both hands full
O' warter-lilies—'peared-like new-
Bloomed fer him—renched whiter still
In the clear rain, mixin' fine
And finer in the noon sunshine. . . .
Winders of the old mill looked
On him where the hill-road crooked
In on through the open gate. . . .
Laid him on the old settee
On the porch there. Heerd the great
Roarin' dam acrost—and we
Heerd a crane cry in amongst
The sycamores—and then a dove
Cutterin' on the mill-roof—then
Heerd the crick, and thought again,
"*Now* what's it a-talkin' of?"

THE PIPES OF PAN

THE Pipes of Pan! Not idler now are they
Than when their cunning fashioner first blew
The pith of music from them: Yet for you
And me their notes are blown in many a way
Lost in our murmurings for that old day
That fared so well without us.—Waken to
The pipings here at hand:—The clear halloo
Of truant voices, and the roundelay
The waters warble in the solitude
Of blooming thickets, where the robin's breast
Sends up such ecstasy o'er dale and dell
Each tree top answers, till in all the wood
There lingers not one squirrel in his nest
Whetting his hunger on an empty shell.

DOWN AROUND THE RIVER

NOON-TIME and June-time, down around the river!
Have to furse with Lizey Ann—but lawzy! I fergive her!
Drives me off the place, and says 'at all 'at she's a-wishin',
Land o' gracious! time'll come I'll git enough o' fishin'!
Little Dave, a-choppin' wood, never 'pears to notice;
Don't know where she's hid his hat, er keerin' where his coat is,—
Specalatin', more'n like, he hain't a-goin' to mind me,
And guessin' where, say twelve o'clock, a feller'd likely find me.

Noon-time and June-time, down around the river!
Clean out o' sight o' home, and skulkin' under kivver
Of the sycamores, jack-oaks, and swamp-ash and ellum—

Idies all so jumbled up, you kin hardly tell 'em!—
Tired, you know, but *lovin'* it, and smilin' jes' to
think 'at
Any sweeter tiredness you'd fairly want to *drink* it.
Tired o' fishin'—tired o' fun—line out slack and
slacker—
All you want in all the world's a little more
tobacker!

Hungry, but *a-hidin'* it, er jes' a-not a-keerin':—
Kingfisher gittin' up and skootin' out o' hearin';
Snipes on the t'other side, where the County Ditch
is,
Wadin' up and down the aidge like they'd rolled
their britches!
Old turkle on the root kind o' sort o' drappin'
Intoo th' worter like he don't know how it happen!
Worter, shade and all so mixed, don't know which
you'd orter
Say, th' *worter* in the shadder—*shadder* in the
worter!

Somebody hollerin'—'way around the bend in
Upper Fork—where yer eye kin jes' ketch the
endin'
Of the shiney wedge o' wake some muss-rat's a-
makin'
With that pesky nose o' his! Then a sniff o' bacon,
Corn-bread and 'dock-greens—and little Dave a-
shinnin'

'Crost the rocks and mussel-shells, a-limpin' and a-grinnin',
With yer dinner fer ye, and a blessin' from the giver.
Noon-time and June-time down around the river!

HIS MOTHER

DEAD! my wayward boy—*my own*—
Not *the Law's!* but *mine*—the good
God's free gift to me alone,
Sanctified by motherhood.

"Bad," you say: Well, who is not?
"Brutal"—"with a heart of stone"—
And "red-handed."—Ah! the hot
Blood upon your own!

I come not, with downward eyes,
To plead for him shamedly,—
God did not apologize
When he gave the boy to me.

Simply, I make ready now
For *His* verdict.—*You* prepare—
You have killed us both—and how
Will you face us There?

IN BOHEMIA

HA! My dear! I'm back again—
Vender of Bohemia's wares!
Lordy! How it pants a man
Climbing up those awful stairs!
Well, I've made the dealer say
Your sketch *might* sell, anyway!
And I've made a publisher
Hear my poem, Kate, my dear.

In Bohemia, Kate, my dear—
Lodgers in a musty flat
On the top floor—living here
Neighborless, and used to that,—
Like a nest beneath the eaves,
So our little home receives
Only guests of chirping cheer—
We'll be happy, Kate, my dear!

Under your north light there, you
At your easel, with a stain
On your nose of Prussian blue,
Paint your bits of shine and rain;

With my feet thrown up at will
O'er my littered window-sill,
I write rhymes that ring as clear
As your laughter, Kate, my dear.

Puff my pipe, and stroke my hair—
Bite my pencil-tip and gaze
At you, mutely mooning there
O'er your "Aprils" and your "Mays"!
Equal inspiration in
Dimples of your cheek and chin,
And the golden atmosphere
Of your paintings, Kate, my dear!

Trying! Yes, at times it is,
To clink happy rhymes, and fling
On the canvas scenes of bliss,
When we are half famishing!—
When your "jersey" rips in spots,
And your hat's "forget-me-nots"
Have grown tousled, old and sear—
It is trying, Kate, my dear!

But—as sure—*some* picture sells,
And—sometimes—the poetry—
Bless us! How the parrot yells
His acclaims at you and me!
How we revel then in scenes
Or high banqueting!—sardines—
Salads—olives—and a sheer
Pint of sherry, Kate, my dear!

Even now I cross your palm
With this great round world of gold!—
"Talking wild?" Perhaps I am—
Then, this little five-year-old!—
Call it anything you will,
So it lifts your face until
I may kiss away that tear
Ere it drowns me, Kate, my dear.

MOON-DROWNED

'TWAS the height of the fête when we quitted the riot,
And quietly stole to the terrace alone,
Where, pale as the lovers that ever swear by it,
The moon it gazed down as a god from his throne.
We stood there enchanted.—And O the delight of
The sight of the stars and the moon and the sea,
And the infinite skies of that opulent night of
Purple and gold and ivory!

The lisp of the lip of the ripple just under—
The half-awake nightingale's dream in the yews—
Came up from the water, and down from the wonder
Of shadowy foliage, drowsed with the dews,—
Unsteady the firefly's taper—unsteady
The poise of the stars, and their light in the tide,
As it struggled and writhed in caress of the eddy,
As love in the billowy breast of a bride.

The far-away lilt of the waltz rippled to us,
And through us the exquisite thrill of the air:
Like the scent of bruised bloom was her breath, and its dew was
Not honier-sweet than her warm kisses were.

We stood there enchanted.—And O the delight of
  The sight of the stars and the moon and the sea,
And the infinite skies of that opulent night of
  Purple and gold and ivory!

WHO SANTY CLAUS WUZ

JES' a little bit o' feller—I remember still,—
Ust to almost *cry* fer Christmas, like a youngster will.
Fourth o' July's nothin' to it!—New-Year's ain't a smell:
Easter-Sunday—Circus-Day—jes' all dead in the shell!
Lordy, though! at night, you know, to set around and hear
The old folks work the story off about the sledge and deer,
And "Santy" skootin' round the roof, all wrapped in fur and fuzz—
Long afore
I knowed who
"Santy Claus" wuz!

Ust to wait, and set up late, a week or two ahead:
Couldn't hardly keep awake, ner wouldn't go to bed:
Kittle stewin' on the fire, and Mother settin' here
Darnin' socks, and rockin' in the skreeky rockin'-cheer;

Pap gap', and wunder where it wuz the money went,
And quar'l with his frosted heels, and spill his liniment:
And me a-dreamin' sleigh-bells when the clock 'ud whir and buzz,
Long afore
I knowed who
"Santy Claus" wuz!

Size the fireplace up, and figger how "Old Santy" could
Manage to come down the chimbly, like they said he would:
Wisht that I could hide and see him—wundered what he'd say
Ef he ketched a feller layin' fer him thataway!
But I *bet* on him, and *liked* him, same as ef he had
Turned to pat me on the back and say, "Look here, my lad,
Here's my pack,—jes' he'p yourse'f, like all good boys does!"
Long afore
I knowed who
"Santy Claus" wuz!

Wisht that yarn wuz *true* about him, as it 'peared to be—
Truth made out o' lies like that 'un's good enough fer me!—
Wisht I still wuz so confidin' I could jes' go wild
Over hangin' up my stockin's, like the little child

Climbin' in my lap to-night, and beggin' me to tell
'Bout them reindeers, and "Old Santy" that she
loves so well
I'm half sorry fer this little-girl-sweetheart of his—
Long afore
She knows who
"Santy Claus" is!

TO MY GOOD MASTER

IN fancy, always, at thy desk, thrown wide,
Thy most betreasured books ranged
neighborly—
The rarest rhymes of every land and sea
And curious tongue—thine old face glorified,—
Thou haltest thy glib quill, and, laughing-eyed,
Givest hale welcome even unto me,
Profaning thus thine attic's sanctity,
Briefly to visit, yet to still abide
Enthralled there of thy sorcery of wit
And thy songs' most exceeding dear conceits.
O lips, cleft to the ripe core of all sweets,
With poems, like nectar, issuing therefrom,
Thy gentle utterances do overcome
My listening heart and all the love of it!

CHAIRLEY BURKE'S IN TOWN

IT'S Chairley Burke's in town, b'ys! He's down
til "Jamesy's Place,"
Wid a bran'-new shave upon 'um, an' the fhwhusk-
ers aff his face;
He's quit the Section-Gang last night, an' yez can
chalk it down
There's goin' to be the divil's toime, since Chairley
Burke's in town.

Ye'll know 'um by the neck av 'um behind—the tan
an' fair
The barber left he overfilled before he mowed a
hair;
Ye'll know 'um by the ja'nty hat juist bought he's
wearin' now—
But Chairley—*He'll* not miss it in the mornin' ony-
how!

It's treatin' iv'ry b'y he is, an' poundin' on the bar
Till iv'ry man he's dhrinkin' wid musht shmoke a
foine cigar;
An' Missus Murphy's little Kate, that's coomin'
there for beer,
Can't pay wan cint the bucketful, the whilst that
Chairley's here!

He's joompin' oor the tops av shtools, the both forninsht an' back!
He'll lave yez pick the blessed flure, an' walk the straightest crack!
He's liftin' barrels wid his teeth, an' singin' "Garry Owen,"
Till all the house be shtrikin' hands, since Chairley Burke's in town.

He'll sink the glitther av his eye a-dancin' deep an' dim
The toime yez tie his hands behind an' thin lave go av him!—
An' fwhat's the knots av mortal man ag'insht the nimble twisht
An' shlim an' shlender soopleness that *he* have in his wrisht!

The Road-Yaird hands coomes dhroppin' in, an' niver goin' back;
An' there's two freights upon the switch—the wan on aither track—
An' Mr. Gearry, from The Shops, he's mad enough to shwear,
An' durstn't spake a word but grin, the whilst that Chairley's there!

Och! Chairley! Chairley! Chairley Burke! ye divil, wid yer ways
Av dhrivin' all the throubles aff, these dhark an' ghloomy days!

Ohone! that it's meself, wid all the graifs I have to dhrown,
Must lave me pick to resht a bit, since Chairley Burke's in town.

WAIT FOR THE MORNING

WAIT for the morning:—It will come, indeed,
As surely as the night hath given need.
The yearning eyes, at last, will strain their sight
No more unanswered by the morning light;
No longer will they vainly strive, through tears,
To pierce the darkness of thy doubts and fears,
But, bathed in balmy dews and rays of dawn,
Will smile with rapture o'er the darkness drawn.

Wait for the morning, O thou smitten child,
Scorned, scourged and persecuted and reviled—
Athirst and famishing, none pitying thee,
Crowned with the twisted thorns of agony—
No faintest gleam of sunlight through the dense
Infinity of gloom to lead thee thence.—
Wait for the morning:—It will come, indeed,
As surely as the night hath given need,

YOUTH AND AGE

WHEN in our blithest youth we sing,
We sing our saddest—slack the string
Of music into saddest key,
And sob, with voices quavering
In pangs of melody.

When in maturer years—
When grown acquaint with sighs and tears—
Our voices ring a lighter tone,
Our perverse harp peals o'er the moan—
A pæan of hope that lifts and cheers.

And last, in age's bleak extreme,
With youth, life, love, all—all a dream,
What glad songs leap
To our glad lips—what raptures gleam
In the old eyes—too glad to weep.

THE POET OF THE FUTURE

O THE Poet of the Future! He will come to us as comes
The beauty of the bugle's voice above the roar of drums—
The beauty of the bugle's voice above the roar and din
Of battle-drums that pulse the time the victor marches in.
His hands will hold no harp, in sooth; his lifted brow will bear
No coronet of laurel—nay, nor symbol anywhere,
Save that his palms are brothers to the toiler's at the plow,
His face to heaven, and the dew of duty on his brow.

He will sing across the meadow,—and the woman at the well
Will stay the dripping bucket, with a smile ineffable;
And the children in the orchard will gaze wistfully the way
The happy songs come to them, with the fragrance of the hay;

The barn will neigh in answer, and the pasture-
lands behind
Will chime with bells, and send responsive lowings
down the wind;
And all the echoes of the wood will jubilantly call
In sweetest mimicry of that one sweet voice
of all.

O the Poet of the Future! He will come as man to
man,
With the honest arm of labor, and the honest face
of tan,
The honest heart of lowliness, the honest soul of
love
For human-kind and nature-kind about him and
above.
His hands will hold no harp, in sooth; his lifted
brow will bear
No coronet of laurel—nay, nor symbol anywhere,
Save that his palms are brothers to the toiler's at
the plow,
His face to heaven, and the dew of duty on his
brow.

NAUGHTY CLAUDE

WHEN Little Claude was naughty wunst
At dinner-time, an' said
He won't say *"Thank you"* to his Ma,
She maked him go to bed
An' stay two hours an' not git up,—
So when the clock struck Two,
Nen Claude says,—"Thank you, Mr. Clock,
I'm much obleeged to you!"

THE ARTEMUS OF MICHIGAN

GRAND HAVEN is in Michigan, and in
possession, too,
Of as many rare attractions as our party ever
knew:—
The fine hotel, the landlord, and the lordly bill of
fare,
And the dainty-neat completeness of the pretty
waiters there;
The touch on the piano in the parlor, and the trill
Of the exquisite soprano—in our fancy singing still;
Our cozy room, its comfort, and our thousand
grateful thoughts,
And at our door the gentle face
Of
H.
Y.
Potts!

His artless observations, and his drollery of style,
Bewildered with that sorrowful serenity of smile—
The eye's elusive twinkle, and the twitching of the
lid,

Like he didn't go to say it and was sorry that he did.
O Artemus of Michigan! so worthy of the name,
Our manager indorses it, and Bill Nye does the same,—
You tickled our affection in so many tender spots
That even Recollection laughs
At
H.
Y.
Potts!

And hark ye! O Grand Haven! count your rare attractions o'er—
The commerce of your ships at sea, and ships along the shore;
Your railroads, and your industries, and interests untold,
Your Opera-house—our lecture, and the gate-receipts in gold!—
Ay, Banner Town of Michigan! count all your treasures through—
Your crowds of summer tourists, and your Sanitarium, too;
Your lake, your beach, your drives, your breezy groves and grassy plots,
But head the list of all of these
With
H.
Y.
Potts!

WAITIN' FER THE CAT TO DIE

LAWZY! don't I rickollect
That-air old swing in the lane!
Right and proper, I expect,
Old times *can't* come back again;
But I want to state, ef they
Could come back, and I could say
What *my* pick 'ud be, i jing!
I'd say, Gimme the old swing
'Nunder the old locus' trees
On the old place, ef you please!—
Danglin' there with half-shet eye,
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

I'd say, Gimme the old gang
O' barefooted, hungry, lean,
Ornry boys you want to hang
When you're growed up twic't as mean!
The old gyarden-patch, the old

Truants, and the stuff we stol'd!
The old stompin'-groun', where we
Wore the grass off, wild and free
As the swoop o' the old swing,
Where we ust to climb and cling,
And twist roun', and fight, and lie—
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

'Pears like I most allus could
  Swing the highest of the crowd—
Jes' sail up there tel I stood
  Down-side up, and screech out loud,—
Ketch my breath, and jes' drap back
Fer to let the old swing slack,
Yit my towhead dippin' still
In the green boughs, and the chill
Up my backbone taperin' down,
With my shadder on the groun'
Slow and slower trailin' by—
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

Now my daughter's little Jane's
  Got a kind o' baby-swing
On the porch, so's when it rains
  She kin play there—little thing!
And I'd limped out t'other day
With my old cheer thisaway,
Swingin' *her* and rockin' too,
Thinkin' how *I* ust to do

At *her* age, when suddenly,
"Hey, Gran'pap!" she says to me,
"Why you rock so slow?" . . . Says I,
"Waitin' fer the cat to die!"

THE ALL-KIND MOTHER

LO, whatever is at hand
Is full meet for the demand:
Nature ofttimes giveth best
When she seemeth chariest.
She hath shapen shower and sun
To the need of every one—
Summer bland and winter drear,
Dimpled pool and frozen mere.
All thou lackest she hath still
Near thy finding and thy fill.
Yield her fullest faith, and she
Will endow thee royally.

Loveless weed and lily fair
She attendeth here and there—
Kindly to the weed as to
The lorn lily teared with dew.
Each to her hath use as dear
As the other; an thou clear
Thy cloyed senses thou may'st see
Haply all the mystery.
Thou shalt see the lily get
Its divinest blossom; yet
Shall the weed's tip bloom no less
With the song-bird's gleefulness.

Thou art poor, or thou art rich—
Never lightest matter which;
All the glad gold of the noon,
All the silver of the moon,
She doth lavish on thee, while
Thou withholdest any smile
Of thy gratitude to her,
Baser used than usurer.
Shame be on thee an thou seek
Not her pardon, with hot cheek,
And bowed head, and brimming eyes
At her merciful "Arise!"

TO HATTIE—ON HER BIRTHDAY

WRITTEN IN "A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES"

WHEN your "Uncle Jim" was
younger,
In the days of childish hunger
For the honey of such verses
As this little book rehearses
In such sweet simplicity,—
Just the simple gift that this is
Would have brimmed his heart with blisses
Sweet as Hattie's sweetest kisses,
On her anniversary.

DOWN TO THE CAPITAL

I'BE'N down to the Capital at Washington,
D. C.,
Where Congerss meets and passes on the pensions
ort to be
Allowed to old one-legged chaps, like me, 'at sence
the war
Don't wear their pants in pairs at all—and yit how
proud we are!

Old Flukens, from our deestrick, jes' turned in and
tuck and made
Me stay with him whilse I was there; and longer 'at
I stayed
The more I kep' a-wantin' jes' to kind o' git away,
And yit a-feelin' sociabler with Flukens ever' day.

You see I'd got the idy—and I guess most folks
agrees—
'At men as rich as him, you know, kin do jes' what
they please;
A man worth stacks o' money, and a Congerssman
and all,
And livin' in a buildin' bigger'n Masonic Hall!

Now mind, I'm not a-faultin' Fluke—he made his
money square:
We both was Forty-niners, and both bu'sted gittin'
there;
I weakened and onwindlassed, and he stuck and
stayed and made
His millions; don't know what *I'm* worth untel my
pension's paid.

But I was goin' to tell you—er a-ruther goin' to try
To tell you how he's livin' now: gas burnin' mighty
nigh
In ever' room about the house; and ever' night,
about,
Some blame reception goin' on, and money goin' out.

They's people there from all the world—jes' ever'
kind 'at lives,
Injuns and all! and Senaters, and Ripresentatives;
And girls, you know, jes' dressed in gauze and roses,
I *de*clare,
And even old men shamblin' round and a-waltzin'
with 'em there!

And bands a-tootin' circus-tunes, 'way in some other
room
Jes' chokin' full o' hothouse plants and pinies and
perfume;
And fountains, squirtin' stiddy all the time; and
statutes, made
Out o' puore marble, 'peared-like, sneakin' round
there in the shade.

And Fluke he coaxed and begged and pled with
me to take a hand
And sashay in amongst 'em—crutch and all, you
understand;
But when I said how tired I was, and made fer
open air,
He follered, and tel five o'clock we set a-talkin'
there.

"My God!" says he—Fluke says to me, "I'm
tireder'n you;
Don't putt up yer tobacker tel you give a man a
chew.
Set back a leetle furder in the shadder—that'll do;
I'm tireder'n you, old man; I'm tireder'n you.

"You see that-air old dome," says he, "humped up
ag'inst the sky?
It's grand, first time you see it; but it changes, by
and by,
And then it stays jes' thataway—jes' anchored high
and dry
Betwixt the sky up yender and the achin' of yer
eye.

"Night's purty; not so purty, though, as what it
ust to be
When my first wife was livin'. You remember her?"
says he.
I nodded-like, and Fluke went on, "I wonder now
ef she
Knows where I am—and what I am—and what
I ust to be?

"That band in there!—I ust to think 'at music
couldn't wear
A feller out the way it does; but that ain't music
there—
That's jes' a' *imitation,* and like ever'thing, I swear,
I hear, er see, er tetch, er taste, er tackle anywhere!

"It's all jes' *artificial,* this-'ere high-priced life of
ours;
The theory, *it's* sweet enough, tel it saps down and
sours.
They's no *home* left, ner *ties* o' home about it. By
the powers,
The whole thing's artificialer'n artificial flowers!

"And all I want, and could lay down and *sob* fer,
is to know
The homely things of homely life; fer instance, jes'
to go
And set down by the kitchen stove—Lord! that
'u'd rest me so,—
Jes' set there, like I ust to do, and laugh and joke,
you know.

"Jes' set there, like I ust to do," says Fluke,
a-startin' in,
'Peared-like, to say the whole thing over to his-
se'f ag'in;
Then stopped and turned, and kind o' coughed,
and stooped and fumbled fer
Somepin' o' 'nuther in the grass—I guess his hand-
kercher.

Well, sence I'm back from Washington, where I
left Fluke a-still
A-leggin' fer me, heart and soul, on that-air pen-
sion bill,
I've half-way struck the notion, when I think o'
wealth and sich,
They's nothin' much patheticker'n jes' a-bein' rich!

JAP MILLER

JAP MILLER down at Martinsville's the blamedest feller yit!
When *he* starts in a-talkin' other folks is apt to quit!—
'Pears like that mouth o' his'n wuzn't made fer nothin' else
But jes' to argify 'em down and gether in their pelts:
He'll talk you down on tariff; er he'll talk you down on tax,
And prove the pore man pays 'em all—and them's about the fac's!—
Religen, law, er politics, prize-fightin' er baseball—
Jes' tetch Jap up a little and he'll post you 'bout 'em all.

And the comicalist feller ever tilted back a cheer
And tuk a chaw tobacker kind o' like he didn't keer.—
There's where the feller's stren'th lays,—he's so common-like and plain,—
They hain't no dude about old Jap, you bet you—nary grain!

They 'lected him to Council and it never turned his head,
And didn't make no differunce what anybody said,—
He didn't dress no finer, ner rag out in fancy clothes;
But his voice in Council-meetin's is a turrer to his foes

He's fer the pore man ever' time! And in the last campaign
He stumped old Morgan County, through the sunshine and the rain,
And helt the banner up'ards from a-trailin' in the dust,
And cut loose on monopolies and cuss'd and cuss'd and cuss'd!
He'd tell some funny story ever' now and then, you know,
Tel, blame it! it wuz better'n a Jack-o'-lantern show!
And I'd go furder, yit, to-day, to hear old Jap norate
Than any high-toned orater 'at ever stumped the State!

W'y, that-air blame Jap Miller, with his keen sircastic fun,
Has got more friends than ary candidate 'at ever run!

Don't matter what *his* views is, when he states the
same to you,
They allus coincide with yourn, the same as two and
two:
You *can't* take issue with him—er, at least, they
hain't no sense
In startin' in to down him, so you better not com-
mence.—
The best way's jes' to listen, like your humble serv-
ant does,
And jes' concede Jap Miller is the best man ever
wuz!

JOHN TARKINGTON JAMESON

JOHN JAMESON, my jo John!
Ye're bonnie wee an' sma';
Your ee's the morning violet,
Wi' tremblin' dew an' a';
Your smile's the gowden simmer-sheen,
Wi' glintin' pearls aglow
Atween the posies o' your lips,
John Jameson, my jo!

Ye hae the faither's braidth o' brow,
An' synes his look benign
Whiles he hings musin' ower the burn,
Wi' leestless hook an' line;
Ye hae the mither's mou' an' cheek
An' denty chin—but O!
It's maist ye're like your ain braw sel',
John Jameson, my jo!

John Jameson, my jo John,
Though, wi' sic luvers twain,
Ye dance far yont your whustlin' frien'
Wha laggart walks his lane,—

Be mindet, though he naps his last
Whaur kirkyird thistles grow,
His ghaist shall caper on wi' you,
John Jameson, my jo!

HENRY W. GRADY

ATLANTA, DECEMBER 23, 1889

TRUE-HEARTED friend of all true friendliness!—
Brother of all true brotherhoods!—Thy hand
And its late pressure now we understand
Most fully, as it falls thus gestureless
And Silence lulls thee into sweet excess
Of sleep. Sleep thou content!—Thy loved Southland
Is swept with tears, as rain in sunshine; and
Through all the frozen North our eyes confess
Like sorrow—seeing still the princely sign
Set on thy lifted brow, and the rapt light
Of the dark, tender, melancholy eyes—
Thrilled with the music of those lips of thine,
And yet the fire thereof that lights the night
With the white splendor of thy prophecies.

IN THE EVENING

I

IN the evening of our days,
When the first far stars above
Glimmer dimmer, through the haze,
Than the dewy eyes of love,
Shall we mournfully revert
To the vanished morns and Mays
Of our youth, with hearts that hurt,—
In the evening of our days?

II

Shall the hand that holds your own
Till the twain are thrilled as now,—
Be withheld, or colder grown?
Shall my kiss upon your brow
Falter from its high estate?
And, in all forgetful ways,
Shall we sit apart and wait—
In the evening of our days?

III

Nay, my wife—my life!—the gloom
  Shall enfold us velvet-wise,
And my smile shall be the groom
  Of the gladness of your eyes:
Gently, gently as the dew
  Mingles with the darkening maze,
I shall fall asleep with you—
  In the evening of our days.

THOUGHTS ON THE LATE WAR

I WAS for Union—you, ag'in' it.
'Pears like, to me, each side was winner,
Lookin' at now and all 'at's in it.
Le' 's go to dinner.

Le' 's kind o' jes' set down together
And do some pardnership forgittin'—
Talk, say, for instunce, 'bout the weather,
Or somepin' fittin'.

The war, you know, 's all done and ended,
And ain't changed no p'ints o' the compass;
Both North and South the health's jes' splendid
As 'fore the rumpus.

The old farms and the old plantations
Still ockipies the'r old positions.
Le' 's git back to old situations
And old ambitions.

Le' 's let up on this blame', infernal
Tongue-lashin' and lap-jacket vauntin',
And git back home to the eternal
Ca'm we're a-wantin'.

Peace kind o' sort o' suits my diet—
When women does my cookin' for me;
Ther' wasn't overly much pie et
Durin' the army.

THE OLD BAND

IT 'S mighty good to git back to the old town, shore,
Considerin' I've b'en away twenty year and more.
Sence I moved then to Kansas, of course I see a change,
A-comin' back, and notice things that's new to me and strange;
Especially at evening when yer new band-fellers meet,
In fancy uniforms and all, and play out on the street—
. . . What's come of old Bill Lindsey and the Sax-horn fellers—say?
I want to hear the *old* band play.

What's come of Eastman, and Nat Snow? And where's War Barnett at?
And Nate and Bony Meek; Bill Hart; Tom Richa'-son and that
Air brother of him played the drum as twic't as big as Jim;
And old Hi Kerns, the carpenter—say, what's be-come o' him?

I make no doubt yer *new band* now's a *competenter*
band,
And plays their music more by note than what they
play by hand,
And stylisher and grander tunes; but somehow—
*any*way,
I want to hear the *old* band play.

Sich tunes as "John Brown's Body" and "Sweet
Alice," don't you know;
And "The Camels Is A-Comin'," and "John Ander-
son, My Jo";
And a dozent others of 'em—"Number Nine" and
"Number 'Leven"
Was favo-*rites* that fairly made a feller dream o'
Heaven.
And when the boys 'u'd saranade, I've laid so still
in bed
I've even heerd the locus'-blossoms droppin' on the
shed
When "Lilly Dale," er "Hazel Dell," had sobbed
and died away—
. . . I want to hear the *old* band play.

Yer *new* band ma'by beats it, but the *old band's*
what I said—
It allus 'peared to kind o' chord with somepin' in my
head;

And, whilse I'm no musicianer, when my blame' eyes is jes'
Nigh drownded out, and Mem'ry squares her jaws and sort o' says
She *won't* ner *never will* fergit, I want to jes' turn in
And take and light right out o' here and git back West ag'in
And *stay* there, when I git there, where I never haf' to say
I want to hear the *old* band play.

BY ANY OTHER NAME

FIRST the teacher called the roll,
Clos't to the beginnin',
"Addeliney Bowersox!"
Set the school a-grinnin'.
Winter-time, and stingin' cold
When the session took up—
Cold as *we* all looked at *her,*
Though *she* couldn't look up!

Total stranger to us, too—
Country folks ain't allus
Nigh so shameful unpolite
As some people call us!—
But the honest facts is, *then,*
Addeliney Bower-
Sox's feelin's was so hurt
She cried half an hour!

My dest was acrost from hern:
Set and watched her tryin'
To p'tend she didn't keer,
And a kind o' dryin'

Up her tears with smiles—tel I
  Thought, "Well, *'Addeliney*
Bowersox' is plain, but *she's*
  Purty as a piney!"

. . . . . .

It's be'n many of a year
  Sence that most oncommon
Cur'ous name o' *Bowersox*
  Struck me so abomin-
Nubble and outlandish-like!—
  I changed it to Adde-
Liney *Daubenspeck*—and *that*
  Nearly killed her Daddy!

LINES FER ISAAC BRADWELL, OF INDANOPLIS, IND., COUNTY-SEAT OF MARION

[*Writ on the fly-leaf of a volume of the author's poems that come in one of gittin' burnt up in the great Bowen-Merrill's fire of March 17, 1890.*]

THROUGH fire and flood this book has passed.—
Fer what?—I hardly dare to ast—
Less'n it's still to pamper me
With extry food fer vanity;—
Fer, sence it's fell in hands as true
As *yourn* is—and a *Hoosier* too,—
I'm prouder of the book, I jing!
Than 'fore they tried to burn the thing!

"THE LITTLE MAN IN THE TIN-SHOP"

WHEN I was a little boy, long ago,
And spoke of the theater as the "show,"
The first one that I went to see,
Mother's brother it was took me—
(My uncle, of course, though he seemed to be
Only a boy—I loved him so!)
And ah, how pleasant he made it all!
And the things he knew that *I* should know!—
The stage, the "drop," and the frescoed wall;
The sudden flash of the lights; and oh,
The orchestra, with its melody,
And the lilt and jingle and jubilee
Of "The Little Man in the Tin-shop"!

For Uncle showed me the "Leader" there,
With his pale, bleak forehead and long, black hair;
Showed me the "Second," and "'Cello," and "Bass,"
And the "B-Flat," pouting and puffing his face
At the little end of the horn he blew
Silvery-bubbles of music through;
And he coined me names of them, each in turn,

Some comical name that I laughed to learn,
Clean on down to the last and best,—
The lively little man, never at rest,
Who hides away at the end of the string,
And tinkers and plays on everything,—
That's "The Little Man in the Tin-shop"!

Raking a drum like a rattle of hail,
Clinking a cymbal or castanet;
Chirping a twitter or sending a wail
Through a piccolo that thrills me yet;
Reeling ripples of riotous bells,
And tipsy tinkles of triangles—
Wrangled and tangled in skeins of sound
Till it seemed that my very soul spun round,
As I leaned, in a breathless joy, toward my
Radiant uncle, who snapped his eye
And said, with the courtliest wave of his hand,
"Why, that little master of all the band
Is 'The Little Man in the Tin-shop'!

"And I've heard Verdi the Wonderful,
And Paganini, and Ole Bull,
Mozart, Handel, and Mendelssohn,
And fair Parepa, whose matchless tone
Karl, her master, with magic bow,
Blent with the angels', and held her so
Tranced till the rapturous Infinite—
And I've heard arias, faint and low,
From many an operatic light

Glimmering on my swimming sight
Dimmer and dimmer, until, at last,
I still sit, holding my roses fast
For 'The Little Man in the Tin-Shop.' "

Oho! my Little Man, joy to you—
And *yours*—and *theirs*—your lifetime through!
Though *I've* heard melodies, boy and man,
Since first "the show" of my life began,
Never yet have I listened to
Sadder, madder or gladder glees
Than your unharmonied harmonies;
For yours is the music that appeals
To all the fervor the boy's heart feels—
All his glories, his wildest cheers,
His bravest hopes, and his brightest tears;
And so, with his first bouquet, he kneels
To "The Little Man in the Tin-shop."

A SOUTHERN SINGER

WRITTEN IN MADISON CAWEIN'S "LYRICS AND IDYLS"

HEREIN are blown from out the South
Songs blithe as those of Pan's pursed mouth—
As sweet in voice as, in perfume,
The night-breath of magnolia-bloom.

Such sumptuous languor lures the sense—
Such luxury of indolence—
The eyes blur as a nymph's might blur,
With water-lilies watching her.

You waken, thrilling at the trill
Of some wild bird that seems to spill
The silence full of winy drips
Of song that Fancy sips and sips.

Betimes, in brambled lanes wherethrough
The chipmunk stripes himself from view,
You pause to lop a creamy spray
Of elder-blossoms by the way.

Or where the morning dew is yet
Gray on the topmost rail, you set
A sudden palm and, vaulting, meet
Your vaulting shadow in the wheat.

On lordly swards, of suave incline,
Entessellate with shade and shine,
You shall misdoubt your lowly birth,
Clad on as one of princely worth:

The falcon on your wrist shall ride—
Your milk-white Arab side by side
With one of raven-black.—You fain
Would kiss the hand that holds the rein.

Nay, nay, Romancer! Poet! Seer
Sing us back home—from there to here:
Grant your high grace and wit, but we
Most honor your simplicity.—

Herein are blown from out the South
Songs blithe as those of Pan's pursed mouth—
As sweet in voice as, in perfume,
The night-breath of magnolia-bloom.

JUNE AT WOODRUFF

OUT at Woodruff Place—afar
From the city's glare and jar,
With the leafy trees, instead
Of the awnings, overhead;
With the shadows cool and sweet,
For the fever of the street;
With the silence, like a prayer,
Breathing round us everywhere.

Gracious anchorage, at last,
From the billows of the vast
Tide of life that comes and goes,
Whence and where nobody knows—
Moving, like a skeptic's thought,
Out of nowhere into naught.
Touch and tame us with thy grace,
Placid calm of Woodruff Place!

Weave a wreath of beechen leaves
For the brow that throbs and grieves
O'er the ledger, bloody-lined,
'Neath the sunstruck window-blind!

Send the breath of woodland bloom
Through the sick man's prison-room,
Till his old farm-home shall swim
Sweet in mind to hearten him!

Out at Woodruff Place the Muse
Dips her sandal in the dews,
Sacredly as night and dawn
Baptize lilied grove and lawn:
Woody path, or paven way—
She doth haunt them night and day,—
Sun or moonlight through the trees,
To her eyes, are melodies.

Swinging lanterns, twinkling clear
Through night-scenes, are songs to her—
Tinted lilts and choiring hues,
Blent with children's glad halloos;
Then belated lays that fade
Into midnight's serenade—
Vine-like words and zithern-strings
Twined through all her slumberings.

Blessèd be each hearthstone set
Neighboring the violet!
Blessèd every roof-tree prayed
Over by the beech's shade!
Blessèd doorway, opening where
We may look on Nature—there
Hand to hand and face to face—
Storied realm, or Woodruff Place.

IRY AND BILLY AND JO

A TINTYPE

IRY an' Billy an' Jo!—
Iry an' Billy's *the boys,*
An' *Jo's* their *dog,* you know,—
Their pictur's took all in a row.
Bet they kin kick up a noise—
Iry an' Billy, the boys,
An' that-air little dog Jo!

Iry's the one 'at stands
Up there a-lookin' so mild
An' meek—with his hat in his hands,
Like such a *'bediant* child—
(*Sakes-alive!*)—An' *Billy* he sets
In the cheer an' holds on to Jo an' *sweats*
Hisse'f, a-lookin' so good! Ho-ho!
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

Yit the way them boys, you know,
Usen to jes' turn in
An' fight over that dog Jo
Wuz a burnin'-shame-an'-a-sin!—

Iry *he'd* argy 'at, by gee-whizz!
That-air little Jo-dog wuz *his!*—
An' Billy *he'd* claim it wuzn't so—
'Cause the dog wuz *hisn!*—An' at it they'd go,
Nip-an'-tugg, tooth-an'-toe-nail, you know—
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

But their Pa—(He wuz the marshal then)—
He 'tended-like 'at he *jerked 'em up;*
An' got a jury o' Brick-yard men
An' helt *a trial* about the pup:
An' *he* says *he* jes' like to 'a' died
When the rest o' us town-boys *testified*—
Regardin', you know,
Iry an' Billy an' Jo.—

'Cause we all knowed, when *the Gipsies* they
Camped down here by the crick last Fall,
They brung Jo with 'em, 'an' give him away
To Iry an' Billy fer nothin' at all!—
So the jury fetched in the *verdick* so
Jo he ain't *neether* o' theirn fer *shore*—
He's *both* their dog, an' jes' no more!
An' so
They've quit quarrelin' long ago,
Iry an' Billy an' Jo.

UNCLE SIDNEY'S VIEWS

I HOLD that the true age of wisdom is when
We are boys and girls, and not women and men,—
When as credulous children we *know* things because
We *believe* them—however averse to the laws.
It is *faith,* then, not science and reason, I say,
That is genuine wisdom.—And would that to-day
We, as then, were as wise and ineffably blest
As to live, love and die, and trust God for the rest!

So I simply deny the old notion, you know,
That the wiser we get as the older we grow!—
For *in youth* all we know we are *certain* of.—*Now*
The greater our knowledge, the more we allow
For skeptical margin.—And hence I regret
That the world isn't flat, and the sun doesn't set,
And we may not go creeping up home, when we die,
Through the moon, like a round yellow hole in the sky.

BEREAVED

LET me come in where you sit weeping,—ay,
Let me, who have not any child to die,
Weep with you for the little one whose love
I have known nothing of.

The little arms that slowly, slowly loosed
Their pressure round your neck; the hands you used
To kiss.—Such arms—such hands I never knew.
May I not weep with you?

Fain would I be of service—say some thing,
Between the tears, that would be comforting,—
But ah! so sadder than yourselves am I,
Who have no child to die.

THE RIDER OF THE KNEE

KNIGHTLY Rider of the Knee
Of Proud-prancing Unclery!
Gaily mount, and wave the sign
Of that mastery of thine.

Pat thy steed and turn him free,
Knightly Rider of the Knee!
Sit thy charger as a throne—
Lash him with thy laugh alone:

Sting him only with the spur
Of such wit as may occur,
Knightly Rider of the Knee,
In thy shriek of ecstasy.

Would, as now, we might endure,
Twain as one—thou miniature
Ruler, at the rein of me—
Knightly Rider of the Knee!

THE LITTLE-RED-APPLE TREE

THE Little-red-apple Tree!—
O the Little-red-apple Tree!
When I was the little-est bit of a boy
And you were a boy with me!
The bluebird's flight from the topmost boughs,
And the boys up there—so high
That we rocked over the roof of the house
And whooped as the winds went by!

Hey! The Little-red-apple Tree!
With the garden-beds below,
And the old grape-arbor so welcomely
Hiding the rake and hoe!
Hiding, too, as the sun dripped through
In spatters of wasted gold,
Frank and Amy away from you
And me in the days of old!

The Little-red-apple Tree!—
In the edge of the garden-spot,
Where the apples fell so lavishly
Into the neighbor's lot;—

So do I think of you alway,
Brother of mine, as the tree,—
Giving the ripest wealth of your love
To the world as well as me.

Ho! The Little-red-apple Tree!
Sweet as its juiciest fruit
Spanged on the palate spicily,
And rolled o'er the tongue to boot,
Is the memory still and the joy
Of the Little-red-apple Tree,
When I was the little-est bit of a boy
And you were a boy with me!

UNCLE SIDNEY

SOMETIMES, when I bin bad,
An' Pa "currecks" me nen,
An' Uncle Sidney he comes here,
I'm allus good again;

'Cause Uncle Sidney says,
An' takes me up an' smiles,—
The goodest mens they is ain't good
As baddest little childs!

IN THE NIGHT

WHEN it's night, and no light, too,
Wakin' by yourse'f,
With the old clock mockin' you
On the mantel-she'f;
In the dark—so still and black,
You're afeard you'll hear
Somepin' awful pop and crack,—
"Go to sleep, my dear!"

That's what *Mother* says.—And *then's*
When we ain't *afeard!*
Wunder, when we be big mens,
Then 'ul we be skeerd?—
Some night Mother's goned away,
And ist *us* is here,
Will The Good Man wake and say,
"Go to sleep, my dear"?

THE DREAM OF THE LITTLE PRINCESS

'TWAS a curious dream, good sooth!—
The dream of The Little Princess;
It seemed a dream, yet a truth,
Long years ago in her youth.—
It *came* as a dream—no less
It was *not* a dream, she says.

(She is singing and saying things
Musical as the wile
Of the eery quaverings
That drip from the grievèd strings
Of her lute.—We weep or smile
Even as she, meanwhile.)

In a day, long dead and gone,
When her castle-turrets threw
Their long, sharp shadows on
The sward like lances,—wan
And lone, she strayed into
Strange grounds where lilies grew.

There, late in the afternoon,
As she sate in the terrace shade,
Rav'ling a half-spun tune
From a lute like a wee new-moon,—
High off was a bugle played,
And a sound as of steeds that neighed.

And the lute fell from her hands,
As her eyes raised, half in doubt,
To the arch of the azure lands
Where lo! with the fluttering strands
Of a rainbow reined about
His wrist, rode a horseman out.

And The Little Princess was stirred
No less at his steeds than him;—
A jet-black span of them gird
In advance, he bestrode the third;
And the troop of them seemed to swim
The skies as the Seraphim.

Wingless they were, yet so
Upborne in their wondrous flight—
As their master bade them go,
They dwindled on high; or lo!
They curved from their heavenmost height
And swooped to her level sight.

And the eyes of The Little Princess
Grow O so bright as the chants
Of the horseman's courtliness,—

Saluting her low—Ah, yes!
And lifting a voice that haunts
Her own song's weird romance.

For (she sings) at last he swept
As near to her as the tips
Of the lilies, that whitely slept,
As he leaned o'er one and wept
And touched it with his lips—
Sweeter than honey-drips!

And she keeps the lily yet—
As the horseman bade (she says)
As he launched, with a wild curvet,
His steeds toward the far sunset,
Till gulfed in its gorgeousness
And lost to The Little Princess:

But O my master sweet!
He is coming again! (*she sings*)
My Prince of the Coursers fleet,
With his bugle's echoings,
And the breath of his voice for the wings
Of the sandals of his feet!

THE SQUIRT-GUN UNCLE MAKED ME

UNCLE SIDNEY, when he was here,
Maked me a squirt-gun out o' some
Elder-bushes 'at growed out near
Where wuz the brick-yard—'way out clear
To where the Toll-Gate come!

So when we walked back home again,
He maked it, out in our woodhouse where
Wuz the old work-bench, an' the old jack-plane,
An' the old 'poke-shave, an' the tools all lay'n'
Ist like he wants 'em there.

He sawed it first with the old hand-saw;
An' nen he peeled off the bark, an' got
Some glass an' scraped it; an' told 'bout Pa,
When *he* wuz a boy an' fooled his Ma,
An' the whippin' 'at he caught.

Nen Uncle Sidney, he took an' filed
A' old arn ramrod; an' one o' the ends
He screwed fast into the vise; an' smiled,
Thinkin', he said, o' when he wuz a child,
'Fore him an' Pa wuz mens.

He punched out the peth, an' nen he putt
A plug in the end with a hole notched through;
Nen took the old drawey-knife an' cut
An' maked a hande 'at shoved clean shut
But ist where yer hand held to.

An' he wropt th'uther end with some string an' white
Piece o' the sleeve of a' old tored shirt;
An' nen he showed me to hold it tight,
An' suck in the water an' work it right.—
An' it 'ud ist squirt an' squirt!

THE YOUTHFUL PRESS

LITTLE Georgie Tompers, he
Printed some fine cards for me;
But his press had "J" for *James*—
By no means the choice of names.—

Yet it's proper, none the less,
That his little printing-press
Should be taught that *James* for "J"
Always is the better way.

For, if left to its own whim,
Next time it might call me "Jim,"—
Then THE CULTURED PRESS would be
Shocked at such a liberty.

Therefore, little presses all
Should be trained, while they are small,
To develop *taste* in these
Truths that shape our destinies.

MAX AND JIM

MAX an' Jim,
They're each other's
Fat an' slim
Little brothers.

Max is thin,
An' Jim, the fac's is,
Fat ag'in
As little Max is!

Their Pa 'lowed
He don't know whuther
He's most proud
Of one er th'other!

Their Ma says
They're both so sweet—*'m!*—
That she guess
She'll haf to eat 'em!

THE OLD HAYMOW

THE Old Haymow's the place to play
Fer boys, when it's a rainy day!
I good 'eal ruther be up there
Than down in town, er anywhere!

When I play in our stable-loft,
The good old hay's so dry an' soft,
An' feels so fine, an' smells so sweet,
I 'most ferget to go an' eat.

An' one time onc't I *did* ferget
To go tel dinner was all et,—
An' they had shortcake—an'—Bud he
Hogged up the piece Ma saved fer me!

Nen I won't let him play no more
In our haymow where I keep store
An' got hen-eggs to sell,—an' shoo
The cackle-un old hen out, too!

An' nen, when Aunty she was here
A-visitun from Rensselaer,
An' bringed my little cousin,—*he*
Can come up there an' play with me.

But, after while—when Bud he bets
'At I can't turn no summersetts,
I let him come up, ef he can
Ac' ha'f-way like a gentleman!

GUINEY-PIGS

GUINEY-PIGS is awful cute,
With their little trimbly snoot
Sniffin' at the pussly that
We bring 'em to nibble at.
Looks like they're so clean an' white,
An' so dainty an' polite,
They could eat like you an' me
When they's company!

Tiltin' down the clover-tops
Till they spill, an' overdrops
The sweet morning dew—Don't you
Think they might have napkins, too?
Ef a guiney-pig was big
As a *shore-an'-certain* pig,
Nen he wouldn't ac' so fine
When he come to dine.

Nen he'd chomp his jaws an' eat
Things out in the dirty street,
Dirt an' all! An' nen lay down
In mud-holes an' waller roun'!
So the *guiney-pigs* is best,
'Cause they're nice an' tidiest;
They eat 'most like you an' me
When they's company!

BUSCH AND TOMMY

LITTLE Busch and Tommy Hays—
Small the theme, but large the praise,—
For two braver brothers,
Of such toddling years and size,
Bloom of face, and blue of eyes,
Never trampled soldier-wise
On the rights of mothers!

Even boldly facing their
Therapeutic father's air
Of complex abstraction,
But to kindle—kindlier gaze,
Wake more smiles and gracious ways—
Ay, nor find in all their days
Ampler satisfaction!

Hail ye, then, with chirp and cheer,
All wan patients, waiting here
Bitterer medications!—
Busch and Tommy, *tone* us, too.—
How our life-blood leaps anew,
Under loving touch of you
And your ministrations!

THE LUGUBRIOUS WHING-WHANG

THE rhyme o' The Raggedy Man's 'at's best
Is Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs,
'Cause that-un's the strangest of all o' the rest,
An' the worst to learn, an' the last one guessed,
An' the funniest one, an' the foolishest.—
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

I don't know what in the world it means—
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!—
An' nen when I *tell* him I don't, he leans
Like he was a-grindin' on some machines
An' says: Ef I *don't,* w'y, I don't know *beans!*
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

Out on the margin of Moonshine Land,
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!
Out where the Whing-Whang loves to stand,
Writing his name with his tail in the sand,
And swiping it out with his oogerish hand;
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

Is it the gibber of Gungs or Keeks?
    Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!
Or what *is* the sound that the Whing-Whang
    seeks?—
Crouching low by the winding creeks,
And holding his breath for weeks and weeks!
    Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

Aroint him the wraithest of wraithly things!
    Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!
'Tis a fair Whing-Whangess, with phosphor rings,
And bridal-jewels of fangs and stings;
And she sits and as sadly and softly sings
As the mildewed whir of her own dead wings,—
    Tickle me, Dear,
        Tickle me here,
    Tickle me, Love, in me Lonesome Ribs!

LITTLE MANDY'S CHRISTMAS-TREE

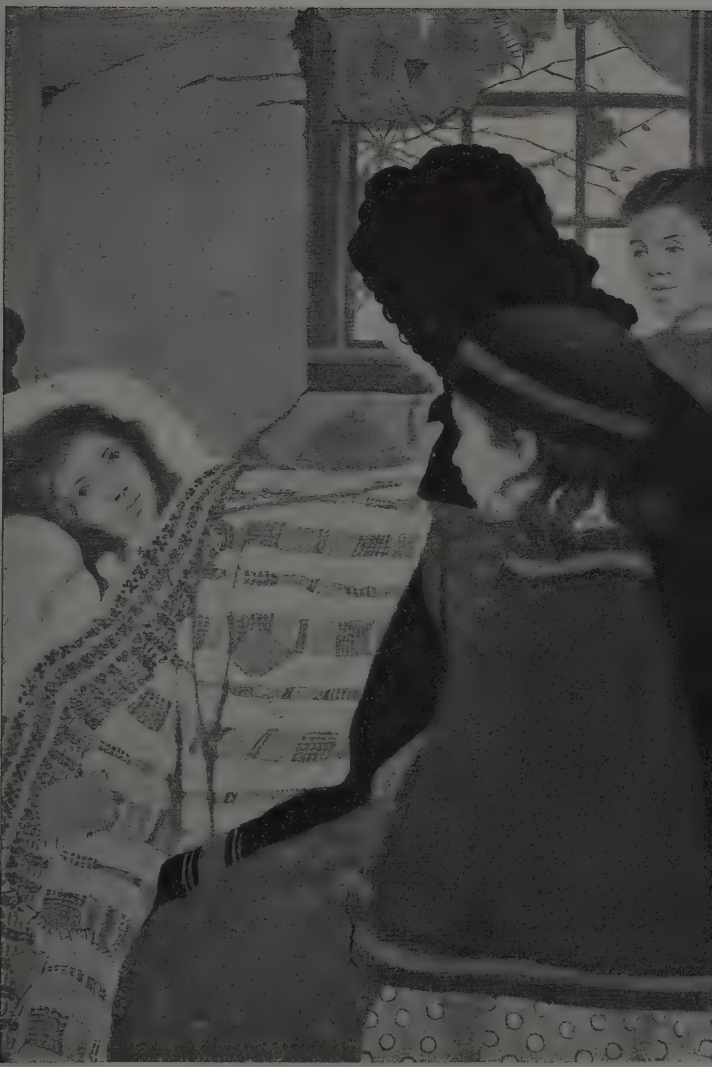
LITTLE Mandy and her Ma
'S porest folks you ever saw!—
Lived in porest house in town,
Where the fence 'uz all tore down.

And no front-door steps at all—
Ist a' old box 'g'inst the wall;
And no door-knob on the door
Outside.—*My!* but they 'uz pore!

Wuz no winder-shutters on,
And some of the *winders* gone,
And where they 'uz broke they'd pas'e
Ist brown paper 'crost the place.

Tell you! when it's *winter there,*
And the snow ist ever'where,
Little Mandy's Ma she say
'Spec' they'll freeze to death some day.

Wunst my Ma and me—when we
Be'n to church, and's goin' to be
Chris'mus purty soon,—we went
There—like the Committee sent.



And my Ma she telled her *we*
Goin' to have a Chris'mus-Tree

And-sir! when we're in the door,
Wuz no carpet on the floor,
And no fire—and heels-and-head
Little Mandy's tucked in bed!

And her Ma telled *my* Ma she
Got no coffee but ist tea,
And fried mush—and's all they had
Sence her health broke down so bad.

Nen Ma hug and hold me where
Little Mandy's layin' there;
And she kiss her, too, and nen
Mandy kiss my Ma again.

And my Ma she telled her *we*
Goin' to have a Chris'mus-Tree,
At the Sund'y-School, 'at's fer
ALL the childern, and fer *her*.

Little Mandy *think*—nen she
Say, "What *is* a Chris'mus-Tree?"
Nen my Ma she give *her* Ma
Somepin' 'at I never saw,

And say she *must* take it,—and
She ist maked her keep her hand
Wite close shut,—and nen she *kiss*
Her hand—shut ist like it is.

Nen we comed away. . . . And nen
When it's Chris'mus Eve again,
And all of us childerns be
At the Church and Chris'mus-Tree—

And all git toys and things
'At old Santy Claus he brings
And puts on the Tree;—wite where
The *big* Tree 'uz standin' there,

And the things 'uz all tooked down,
And the childerns, all in town,
Got their presents—nen we see
Tney's a *little* Chris'mus-Tree

Wite *behind* the *big* Tree—so
We can't see till *nen,* you know,—
And it's all ist loaded down
With the purtiest things in town!

And the teacher smile and say:
"This-here Tree 'at's hid away
It's marked *'Little Mandy's Tree.'*—
Little Mandy! Where is she?"

Nen nobody say a word.—
Stillest place you ever heard!—
Till a man tiptoe up where
Teacher's still a-waitin' there.

Nen the man he whispers, so
Ist the *Teacher* hears, you know.
Nen he tiptoe back and go
Out the big door—ist so slow!

. . . . . .

Little Mandy, though, *she* don't
Answer—and Ma say "she won't
Never, though each year they'll be
'Little Mandy's Chris'mus-Tree'

Fer pore childern"—my Ma says—
And *Committee* say they guess
"Little Mandy's Tree" 'ull be
Bigger than the *other* Tree!

THE FUNNIEST THING IN THE WORLD

THE funniest thing in the world, I know,
Is watchin' the monkeys 'at's in the show!—
Jumpin' an' runnin' an' racin' roun',
'Way up the top o' the pole; nen down!
First they're here, an' nen they're there,
An' ist a'most any an' ever'where!—
Screechin' an' scratchin' wherever they go,
They're the funniest thing in the world, I know!

They're the funniest thing in the world, I think:—
Funny to watch 'em eat an' drink;
Funny to watch 'em a-watchin' us,
An' actin' 'most like grown folks does!—
Funny to watch 'em p'tend to be
Skeered at their tail 'at they happen to see;—
But the funniest thing in the world they do
Is never to laugh, like me an' you!

A FRUIT-PIECE

THE afternoon of summer folds
Its warm arms round the marigolds,

And, with its gleaming fingers, pets
The watered pinks and violets

That from the casement vases spill,
Over the cottage window-sill,

Their fragrance down the garden walks
Where droop the dry-mouthed hollyhocks.

How vividly the sunshine scrawls
The grape-vine shadows on the walls!

How like a truant swings the breeze
In high boughs of the apple-trees!

The slender "free-stone" lifts aloof,
Full languidly above the roof,

A hoard of fruitage, stamped with gold
And precious mintings manifold.

High up, through curled green leaves, a pear
Hangs hot with ripeness here and there.

Beneath the sagging trellisings,
In lush, lack-luster clusterings,

Great torpid grapes, all fattened through
With moon and sunshine, shade and dew,

Until their swollen girths express
But forms of limp deliciousness—

Drugged to an indolence divine
With heaven's own sacramental wine.